

The Emperor in the Byzantine World

EDITED BY Shaun Tougher

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF BYZANTINE STUDIES

THE EMPEROR IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD

The subject of the emperor in the Byzantine world may seem likely to be a well-studied topic but there is no book devoted to the emperor in general covering the span of the Byzantine empire. Of course there are studies on individual emperors, dynasties and aspects of the imperial office/role, but there remains no equivalent to Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World* (from which the proposed volume takes inspiration for its title and scope). The oddity of a lack of a general study of the Byzantine emperor is compounded by the fact that a series of books devoted to Byzantine empresses was published in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Thus it is appropriate to turn the spotlight on the emperor.

Themes covered by the contributions include: questions of dynasty and imperial families; the imperial court and the emperor's men; imperial duties and the emperor as ruler; imperial literature (the emperor as subject and author); and the material emperor, including imperial images and spaces.

The volume fills a need in the field and the market, and also brings new and cutting-edge approaches to the study of the Byzantine emperor. Although the volume cannot hope to be a comprehensive treatment of the emperor in the Byzantine world it aims to cover a broad chronological and thematic span and to play a vital part in setting the agenda for future work. The subject of the Byzantine emperor has also an obvious relevance for historians working on rulership in other cultures and periods.

Shaun Tougher is Reader in Ancient History at Cardiff University. He specialises in late Roman and Byzantine political and social history. His publications include *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912)* (1997), *Julian the Apostate* (2007), *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (2008), *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (2012, co-edited with Nicholas Baker-Brian), and *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* (2013, co-edited with Leslie Brubaker). He is a Series Editor for Palgrave Macmillan's *New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture.*


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This series publishes a selection of papers delivered at the annual British Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, now held under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. These meetings began fifty years ago in the University of Birmingham and have built an international reputation. Themes cover all aspects of Byzantine history and culture, with papers presented by chosen experts. Selected papers from the symposia have been published regularly since 1992 in a series of titles which have themselves become established as major contributions to the study of the Byzantine world.

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Frontispiece: Gold histamenon nomisma of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) (Thomas-Stanford Bequest, National Museum Wales). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

THE EMPEROR IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD

Papers from the Forty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies

Edited by Shaun Tougher



LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2019
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

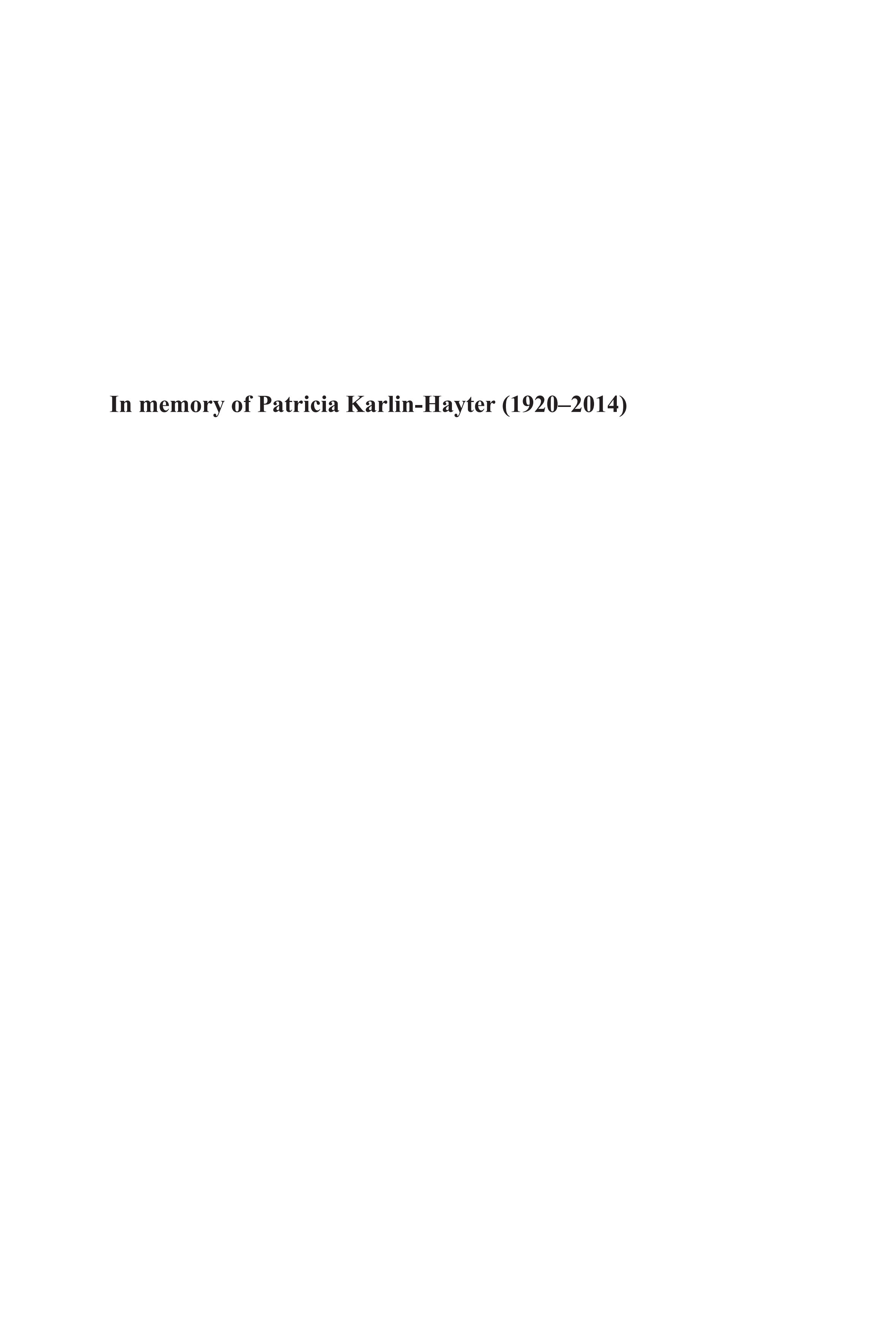
British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Tougher, Shaun, editor.
Title: The Emperor in the Byzantine World / Edited by Shaun Tougher.
Description: First edition. | London ; New York, NY : Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2019. | Series: Society for the promotion of byzantine studies ; 21 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018051926| ISBN 9781138218680 (hardback) | ISBN 9780429060984 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Emperors—Byzantine Empire. | Byzantine Empire—Politics and government. | Byzantine Empire—History.
Classification: LCC DF544 .E57 2019 | DDC 949.5/02—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018051926

ISBN: 978-1-138-21868-0 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-06098-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon, UK

Society For The Promotion Of Byzantine Studies – Publications 21



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FOREWORD

In 2014, for the first time in its history, the Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies was held in Wales, at Cardiff University. From 25th to 27th April delegates gathered in the John Percival Building to discuss the subject of 'The Emperor in the Byzantine World'. This subject was chosen in part to reflect the interests of staff in the School of History, Archaeology and Religious Studies who formed the symposium team: Nicholas Baker-Brian, Josef Lössl, myself and, sadly no longer with us, Frank Trombley. Appositely, John Percival himself, who had been Professor of Ancient History at Cardiff, had notable late antique and early medieval expertise.

The symposium was divided into five main sessions, addressing the following themes: Dynasty; Imperial Literature; The Imperial Court; Imperial Duties; and The Material Emperor. Fifteen invited speakers, three in each session, addressed the symposium. Beyond the UK, speakers came from the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, the USA, South Africa and New Zealand. All bar two of these speakers have contributed to this volume; regrettably Michael Grünbart and Eurydice Georganteli, who spoke respectively on 'The emperor and the patriarch' and 'The omnipresent emperor: Money and authority in the Byzantine world', were unable to provide chapters for the book.

As usual the symposium also featured shorter communications; there were four sessions of these, with speakers hailing from as far afield as Athens, Belfast, Birmingham, Budapest, Cyprus, Ioannina, Istanbul, Leuven, London, Maryland, New York, Oxford, Paris, Rome and Salamanca. It was a pleasure to include three of these communications as chapters in this volume, those by Nikolaos G. Chrissis, Dimitri Korobeinikov and Oscar Prieto Domínguez.

In addition two special lectures were presented. On the Sunday Alessandra Ricci (Koç University) addressed the SPBS AGM on 'Places of memory, memory of places: What is happening to Istanbul's Byzantine heritage?', and on the Friday evening Mark Redknap (National Museum Cardiff) gave a public lecture on 'Wales and Byzantium: Antiquity, connections and collections', delivered in the museum itself in the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre. Mark's paper is also

included in this volume, emphasising the Welsh character of the symposium but also the significant material relating to Byzantium found in Wales and collected in the museum, especially its coin collection.

I am very glad to be able to record in this Foreword some particular acknowledgements. Especial thanks are owed to Cardiff University itself, for its generous funding of the symposium. Financial support was also provided by the publishers Ashgate and Cambridge University Press, who sponsored the reception held after the public lecture, in the imposing hall of the museum. Thanks are owed to several Cardiff postgraduates who assisted ably with making up conference packs and registering delegates: Panagiotis Sotiropoulos, Ulriika Viheralli and Michal Zytka. Thanks are also due to my Cardiff colleagues Nicholas Baker-Brian, Josef Lössl and Frank Trombley for their support in planning, organising and running the conference. Administrative support was provided in the School by the wonderful Emma Fisher. Thanks are also due as usual to Lis Fouladi and her catering team at Aberdare Hall (the university's female-only hall of residence, built in 1893), where the symposium feast was held on the Saturday evening.

Regarding the production of the volume itself, I owe an immense debt of gratitude to the publication team: Rowena Loverance and then Angeliki Lymberopoulou as successive Chairs of the Publications Committee of the SPBS, and especially Michael Greenwood at Routledge for his positivity and supportiveness. This debt is also owed to all the contributors themselves, who have borne the production of the volume with such patience and cheerfulness. Emerging from serving a second three-year stint as Head of Department at Cardiff, it is a great pleasure both to be on research leave and to recall happy memories of the symposium held in this special city in spring 2014.

Shaun Tougher
Cardiff, September 2018

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Frank R. Trombley was Professor in Religious Studies at Cardiff University. He was the author of *Hellenic Religion and Christianization* (1993–94), and co-author of *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite* (2000). He also published numerous articles on war and society in Late Antiquity and Byzantium, societal factors in the transition from paganism to Christianity, and the problems of using inscriptions and archaeological materials to interpret historical texts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASS	*Acta Sanctorum*
AnBoll	*Analecta Bollandiana*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BHG	*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd ed., ed. F. Halkin, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1957)
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BSl	*Byzantinoslavica*
Byz	*Byzantion*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
DOC	P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, II: Phocas to Theodosius III, 602–717*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1968); *III: Leo III to Nicephorus III, 717–1081*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1973)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DOS	J. Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, VI: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda* (Washington, DC, 2009)
EEBS	*Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
FGrH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, F. Jacoby (Berlin, 1923–)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JLA	*Journal of Late Antiquity*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
LBG	*Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, ed. E. Trapp (Vienna, 1994–2017)
Loeb	Loeb Classical Library
ODB	*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A.P. Kazhdan, 3 vols. (New York and Oxford, 1991)
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*

PBW *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, ed. M. Jeffreys *et al.* (King's College London, 2017), available at http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk
PG *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 161 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
PLP *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, ed. E. Trapp *et al.* (Vienna, 1976–96)
PLRE *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. A.H.M. Jones *et al.*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1971–92)
PmbZ *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, I, *641–867*, II, *867–1025*, ed. R.-J. Lilie *et al.* (Berlin, 1998–2013)
REB *Revue des Études Byzantines*
TM *Travaux et Mémoires*
YCS *Yale Classical Studies*

NOTE ON SPELLING OF NAMES

In general I have used Anglicised or Latin forms for names up to the sixth century AD, but Greek forms from the seventh century AD onwards. There are some exceptions however, when an English or Latin form is more familiar (e.g. Heraclius rather than Herakleios, Nicholas rather than Nikolaos).


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INTRODUCTION

Shaun Tougher

At the end of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first century there were published in quick succession four monographs on the Byzantine empress. In 1999 there appeared Lynda Garland's *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204* and Barbara Hill's *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, and in 2001 there followed Judith Herrin's *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* and Liz James' *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*. As Liz James wryly remarked at the opening of her monograph, 'Books on Byzantine empresses seem a little like buses at present: you wait a hundred years for one, and then three or four turn up at once'.[1] Remarkably, no such buses have turned up for the Byzantine emperor; there exists no Byzantine equivalent of Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC – AD 337)*.[2] It was this odd fact that inspired the Symposium on which this volume is based, its title modelled on Millar's famous monograph.

Of course, there have been countless books devoted to particular emperors or aspects of emperors, but the fact remains that for all the centrality of the emperor in the Byzantine world there has been little study of the emperor *as* emperor. The closest approximation which comes to mind is Gilbert Dagron's *Empereur et prêtre: Etude sur le 'césaropapisme' byzantine* published in 1996, followed in 2002 by an English translation titled *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Nevertheless even this book had a very particular aspect of imperial identity to explore, the religious-cum-political character of the emperor. This entailed exploring imperial ideology, such as the ideal of the Byzantine emperor as a New David, and there has been a rich tradition of studying Byzantine imperial ideology through its literature and art. For instance, a previous Symposium, held in St. Andrews in 1992, focused on Byzantine emperors as New Constantines.[3] Perhaps the rise and nature of gender studies explains in part the focus on the empress rather than the emperor, or perhaps even the traditional gendering of Byzantium as a society marked by powerful women and weak men. As alluded to by James, empresses had already drawn the attention of scholars in the early twentieth century, witness Charles Diehl's *Figures Byzantines* in 1906 and 1908, notable also for his later *Impératrices de Byzance* of 1960. While Byzantine

empresses, and Byzantine women generally,[4] have received much study, Byzantine men as men have been neglected. It is perhaps telling that the one group of Byzantine men who have received as much attention as empresses in recent years is eunuchs. Several monographs devoted to them have appeared this century; in 2003 there was published Kathryn Ringrose's *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium*, followed in 2008 by my own *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, and then in 2014 Charis Messis' *Les eunuques à Byzance, entre réalité et imaginaire*. This may also reflect the particular gender interest presented by eunuchs, as well as the fact that they too were part of the gendered depiction of Byzantium as a society characterised by corrupt effeminate eunuchs. Non-eunuch men have fared much less well. In Liz James' edited volume *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, published in 1997, only one chapter addressed men, Charles Barber's 'Homo Byzantinus?'.[5] There are signs, however, that this situation is begining to change. In 2009 there was published Myrto Hatzaki's *Beauty and the Male Body in Byzantium: Perceptions and Representations in Art and Text*, and there followed in 2014 Mark Masterson's *Man to Man: Desire, Homosociality, and Authority in Late-Roman Manhood* and in 2016 Claudia Rapp's *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual*. Thus Byzantine men are finally coming to the fore in Byzantine Studies, and emperors need to be part of this.

Another factor which might explain the lack of a monograph on the Byzantine emperor is the sheer scale of the subject. Even Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World*, covering 368 years in 673 pages, did not address all functions of the Roman emperor, nor did it seek to. Millar declares that the 'subject-matter' of his book 'is certain patterns of contact between the inhabitants of the empire and the emperor in person, and its object is to suggest that these patterns are of fundamental importance in understanding what the Roman empire was'.[6] So, Roman empire rather than Roman emperor.[7] Millar also makes explict that his book does not 'set out to deal with all aspects of the role played by the emperor; in particular it does not deal with the still neglected topic of his relations with client kings, or his diplomatic contacts with kings and peoples beyond the empire; nor with his role as general, and his relations with the army and with individual soldiers'.[8] In the second edition of his book Millar added an 'Afterword', reflecting further on the absences from, and reactions to it.[9] He emphasises again that the book was consciously about the emperor and his civilian subjects; he knew that Brian Campbell's *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 BC–AD 235* was already in preparation.[10] He acknowledges further though that the book did not deal with the visual image of the emperor, the imperial cult and the role of the emperor as priest, or sufficiently with the journeys of the emperor.[11]

Thus to produce a comprehensive and satisfying treatment of the emperor is challenging. Certainly this volume, like the Symposium on which it is based, does not claim to be the last word on the Byzantine emperor, or even to cover all salient aspects of the Byzantine emperor; that would be impossible in a

conference of 15 main papers and a number of short communications, and in a book of 17 chapters. The approach taken to organising the conference and the volume was to address a range of particular and important aspects covering the chronological span of the empire, though the Middle Byzantine period receives more representation than Early or Late Byzantium. The volume sticks to the five aspects chosen for the conference though orders them slightly differently, as follows: Part I: *Dynasty: Imperial families*; Part II: *The emperor's men: Court and empire*; Part III: *The emperor as ruler: Duties and ideals*; Part IV: *Imperial literature: Emperor as subject and author*; and Part V: *The material emperor: Image, space and empire*. Many of the chapters, however, cut across these part divisons, as will be clear from the following overview of the volume.

Part I: *Dynasty: Imperial families* consists of four chapters, taking us from the so-called Julio-Claudians to the Palaiologoi. In Chapter 1 Mark Humphries tracks imperial succession from Augustus to the Theodosians. As is well known, the Roman empire did not have codified laws of succession, so different principles could co-exist. There was the sentiment that succession should be dynastic, passing from family member to family member, typically from father to son, but at the same time there also existed the view that it was the person best qualified for the role of emperor that should succeed to imperial power. Taking as his starting point the report in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus that in 364 the *comes domesticorum* Dagalaifus advised Valentinian I not to take his brother Valens as co-emperor but to choose someone else, to put love of the state over love of his family, Humphries surveys imperial sucession over five centuries. His main focus is the Early Byzantine period, from Constantine to the end of the Theodosian dynasty, and he argues that dynastic succession was the norm, though 'there were many different ways of constructing dynastic legitimacy . . . and dynastic claims usually operated alongside other markers of legitimacy, including military success and religious rectitude'. In Chapter 2 Mike Humphreys asks the question 'to what extent did dynasties actually matter?' in relation to the Heraclians (610–695, 705–711). Considering the views of George Ostrogorsky that the Heraclians constituted the first Byzantine dynasty and Dagron that it was the Isaurians (717–802) who deserved this recognition, Humphreys reviews what distinguishes this particular family. He finds that its presentation of itself did vary over time, being explicitly dynastic until the reign of Constantine IV, and then drawing more on alternative justifications and models of rulership, turning from David to Christ and from Constantine I to Justinian I (527–565); once again we witness the alternative means of legitimisation available to Byzantine emperors. Humphreys concludes that 'rather than being its first dynasty, the Heraclians reveal the limits as much as the potential of dynasty in seventh-century Byzantium'. In Chapter 3 Mark Masterson brings us to the Macedonian dynasty, addressing the infamously odd fact that Basil II did not take a wife. Questioning the evidence for a commonly accepted view that religious reasons motivated Basil, Masterson reopens the case for the factor of same-sex desire, through an oration of Symeon the New Theologian and by setting same-sex relationships and attitudes to them within the

cultural context of the time. It transpires that the Byzantines may have had less of a problem with such relationships than might be assumed. The fact remains that Basil's decision not to marry remains odd within standard male imperial behaviour (only one other emperor did not marry, Constans I); as Masterson says, 'Basil's decision not to wed and play a direct part in the continuation of the Macedonian line was a momentous one'. In Chapter 4, the final chapter of Part I, Dimitri Korobeinikov focuses on a specific text to explore questions of dynasty in Late Byzantium. This text is a poem written by Manuel Philes which mentions a certain Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos. Korobeinikov carefully tracks the identity of this individual, and this reveals a dynastic relationship between the Byzantine imperial family and the Seljuks of Rūm, through a marriage in the thirteenth century. This dynastic relationship reflects the altered political status of the Byzantine empire by the thirteenth century, a sign of the 'harsh political reality' of the power of the Seljuks.

Part II: *The emperor's men: Court and empire* consists of three chapters, again taking us from Early to Late Byzantium. In Chapter 5 Meaghan McEvoy focuses on two powerful eastern families and their fortunes in court politics and government in the fifth and early sixth centuries, the Anthemii and the Ardaburii, the former a Roman family, the latter 'a non-Roman, unashamedly "barbarian" family'. McEvoy also discusses the Theodosian dynasty itself, thus her chapter links strongly with Part I, touching especially on the issue of succession. It was the decision of the Theodosians to avoid marriage – most famously demonstrated in the embracing of virginity by Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius II – that ultimately brought about its extinction (thus anticipating the case of Basil II and the fate of the Macedonian dynasty). McEvoy contrasts the failed 'non-alliance policy'of the Theodosians with the long-lived power and influence of the Anthemii and Ardaburii. Shut out from marriage with the imperial family, these families in effect formed military dynasties themselves. As McEvoy observes, while 'the Theodosians died out, these military factions would dominate the course of eastern court politics for almost the next half century'. The chapter also demonstrates that 'despite the pious and civilian image of the court [of Theodosius II], military advisers were never far from the centre of power'. In Chapter 6 Jonathan Shepard considers counsellors of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), focusing in particular on a group of outsiders, the Latins, and examining the role they played in Alexios' 'Pivot to the West'. One thinks of Alexios' plans to secure military support against the Turks as well as his desire to counter the western threat of the Normans, but as Shepard shows, Alexios had wider ambitions than this. Amongst his counsellors and contacts were Latin priests and monks, whose assistance the emperor also sought to attempt to achieve 'Christian consensus'. Thus Shepard's chapter is about how the emperor sought to harness a particular group of his counsellors to help him achieve his military and religious objectives, a model that 'lived on – in the form of his grandson Manuel Komnenos'. Chapter 7, the final chapter in Part II, brings us back to the later empire and its changed fortunes. Jonathan Harris explores the identity of the men who served

the last Byzantine emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos, amongst whom were not just native Byzantines but outsiders. Harris demonstrates that despite the drastically reduced fortunes of the empire at this time individuals were still willing to serve the final Byzantine emperors, who wielded 'a kind of moral authority that was out of all proportion to their political power', maintaining a vital 'residual prestige' even at the end.

Part III: *The emperor as ruler: Duties and ideals* consists of two chapters, on law and war. At the Symposium this section also included a paper on the religious role of the emperor, Michael Grünbart's examination of the emperor's relationship with the patriarch. Regrettably this paper was not able to be included in the volume but there is coverage of the emperor's religious role provided in other sections: in particular in Part II, Jonathan Shepard's Chapter 6, which includes discussion of the religious plans of Alexios I Komnenos as has been seen; in Part IV, Oscar Prieto Domínguez's Chapter 11 examines the image of Theophilos (829–842) in iconodule sources and deals with the role of emperors within the definition of Orthodoxy; and in Part V, Alicia Walker's Chapter 15 examines ceremonial and imperial images within Hagia Sophia and deals with both the transition of the emperor into ecclesiastical status at particular ceremonial moments and also his relationship with the patriarch within the context of utilisation of the church. The chapters on law and war can also touch on the emperor and religion. In Chapter 8 Bernard Stolte deals succinctly with the emperor and the law. He considers the classical idea of law as king of all things and its continuation in Byzantium, and the Byzantine attitude to the relationship between the emperor and the law. This was a relationship heavily advertised by emperors themselves, most famously Justinian I in the sixth century and Basil I and Leo VI in the ninth and tenth centuries. Infamously, under Basil I there was produced the *Eisagoge* which contained a statement which asserted that the patriarch embodied law and was above the emperor, but Stolte points out that this idea is unique to this text; it seems to have been a draft or a one-off, perhaps reflecting the ambitions of the patriarch Photios. Stolte also touches on the role of the emperor in receiving and responding to petitions, an aspect so central to Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World*, and petitioners are also encountered in Lynn Jones' Chapter 16 in Part V, in which she focuses on emperors 'on the road'. Ultimately, as Stolte asserts, when it came to law the emperor 'not only had a monopoly of legislation, but also had the last word in court. Indeed, for practical purposes the *basileus* was the *nomos*'. Chapter 9 turns to the question of the military role of the emperor, touched on elsewhere in the volume too, such as McEvoy's Chapter 5 in Part II, and Savvas Kyriakidis' Chapter 14 on the history of John Kantakouzenos, in Part IV. Frank Trombley and I concentrate on textual accounts of the military activities of Byzantine emperors in the Middle Byzantine period in particular. Focusing on historiography and informed by ideals found in military manuals, we draw out a range of duties emperors are depicted as fulfilling: organising, directing and funding the army, participating in campaigns, providing leadership by example, demonstrating military expertise and intelligence, and securing and

acknowledging divine support for military activities and successes. These depictions provide a sense of what was expected of emperors in the military arena, but first and foremost they are rhetorical constructs designed to assess whether emperors were 'good' or 'bad' rulers.

This brings us neatly to Part IV: *Imperial literature: Emperor as subject and author*. This part has the most chapters, five in total, but in effect of course almost all chapters in the volume deal with images of emperors in literature. Chapter 10 deals with a form of literature fundamental to accessing concepts of what an emperor was like and what he did: imperial panegyric. John Vanderspoel focuses on the Early Byzantine period, when panegyrics are much in evidence compared to the early and high Roman empire; there survives, for instance, the famous *Panegyrici latini*. Vanderspoel's approach to the subject is to consider the function of imperial panegyric. He argues that it had an important role to play within communication between emperor and subject, and could play an active role in discourse, rather than being 'mere flattery', a concept he challenges anyway. He asserts that 'political discourse and independent political thought continued to be possible' in the empire. Panegyric could also be a vehicle for criticism. He provides some particular case studies, from Themistius and Julian, to illustrate his points. He reflects the more recent appreciation that panegyric is a type of literature of the first interest for historians studying emperors, rather than a hideous embarrassment. Chapter 11 also deals with an idealising form of literature, hagiography. Oscar Prieto Domínguez analyses how the image of the 'iconoclast' emperor Theophilos transitioned from one of heretic to saint in hagiography. Effectively the emperor's reputation was rescued through the dynastic impetus of his widow, the empress Theodora, who was acting as regent for their young son Michael III. Prieto Domínguez also emphasises that empress saints have received a great deal of study while emperor saints have not, reinforcing the observation that emperors have been neglected as a subject compared to empresses. Chapter 12 deals with one of the most famous of Byzantine texts – one that features in several chapters in the volume (Chapters 2, 15, 16) – the *Book of Ceremonies*. Prerona Prasad analyses its prefaces to understand the project of the Macedonian Constantine VII to re-establish his dynastic authority after the fall of the Lekapenids, who had pushed him into the shadows. Prasad highlights that in this restoration narrative there was a strong emphasis on paternal legacy within the Macedonian dynasty, Constantine looking back to the achievements of his father, Leo VI, and grandfather Basil I, and forward to the reign of his own son, Romanos II; for instance, Constantine also produced a work of advice on foreign affairs for Romanos II, the *De administrando imperio*. In Chapter 13 we return to issues of panegyric again, Nikolaos Chrissis analysing orations of Niketas Choniates written at the court in Nicaea under Theodore I Laskaris, after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 to the Fourth Crusade. Choniates of course is best known for his *History*, and Chrissis shows how the orations reflect similar ideas to the critical ones found there, despite the orations ostensibly being vehicles to present the ideology of the Nicaean court. Like Vanderspoel, Chrissis argues that the orations are not mere flattery but can

provide advice for the emperor, and can suggest 'a political programme' to him. In Chapter 14 we move further into the late empire, and come face to face with an emperor who was also an historian, John Kantazkouzenos, the author of the 'only surviving history compiled by a Roman emperor'. Savvas Kyriakidis provides a wide-ranging analysis of the roles of a Byzantine emperor revealed in the history of John. For example, the chapter deals with the sacred character of the imperial office, the virtues emperors were expected to display, imperial ideology, issues of legitimacy and dynastic rights, the ceremonial role of the emperor, the rite of coronation, succession, the role and organisation of co-emperors, the military duties of the emperor, and relations with officials. Kyriakidis also emphasises the contrast between ideal and reality, reflecting on how the empire had changed by the time of the later empire. He observes in his conclusion that 'Kantakouzenos strives to paint a traditional portrait of the emperor which seems to ignore political and cultural changes. However, the *History* cannot conceal the fact that political and military realities prompted important changes in the function and prestige of the imperial office'.

The final section, Part V: *The material emperor: Image, space and empire*, consists of three chapters, focusing on emperors and material culture. At the Symposium this section also included a paper by Eurydike Georganteli on the emperor and coinage. Regrettably this paper was not able to be included in the volume but there is coverage of coinage in this section in Mark Redknap's chapter, based on his public lecture for the Symposium. Further, in Part I, Humphreys' chapter includes discussion of the coinage of the Heraclian dynasty. In Chapter 15 Alicia Walker focuses on some of the most famous images of Byzantine emperors, the imperial mosaics in Hagia Sophia, especially the much-discussed image of the emperor in *proskynesis* before an enthroned Christ in the lunette above the Imperial Door, an image commonly associated with Leo VI. Walker combines her analysis of the images in Hagia Sophia with consideration of imperial ceremony conducted within the church, following the movements of the emperor as described in the *Book of Ceremonies*. The Great Church was the 'site for the meeting of imperial and ecclesiastical authority', and Walker comments on the sacred identity the emperor could acquire during these ceremonies. She asserts that in the mosaic above the Imperial Door the emperor is depicted 'in an ambiguous state, as both the all-powerful earthly ruler and the all-humble subject of Christ. He is shown as a privileged witness of theophany and as a high-ranking member of the heavenly court'. In Chapter 16 Lynn Jones is also concerned with ceremony, in the setting of the palace. She focuses in particular on the 'campaign palace', the location of the emperor when he was on the road, away from Constantinople. She emphasises the organisation of the staging of formal audiences with the emperor, and the portability of the objects used for such occasions, not just on campaign but within the Great Palace itself in Constantinople. She argues that 'we [should] broaden the definition of palace, and privilege function over buildings'. Once again we think about the relationship between emperors and non-Byzantines, and Jones describes palaces as 'stages, on which the wealth and power of the empire was displayed'.

In the final chapter, Chapter 17, Mark Redknap is also concerned with the relationship of the emperor and empire with the outside world. Through a range of archaeological evidence, he explores Byzantium's connections – 'perceived or real' – with Britain, and Wales in particular. Inscriptions, coins, pots, luxury items such as metal work and silks, all come under consideration, as do the people themselves. In addition, Redknap considers Welsh collections and collectors. Of particular interest is the significant coin collection of the National Museum Wales itself, and Redknap analyses the depiction of emperors on this coinage. Given that the Symposium took place in Wales for the first time, Redknap's chapter forms a fitting conclusion to the volume, illustrating both Welsh historical connections with, and continued interest in, Byzantium.

Having provided an overview of the chapters some final thoughts on the volume as a whole are in order. As already noted, many of the chapters cut across the imposed subject divisions, expanding the coverage of the chosen subjects. As also noted above, the volume does not aspire to completeness, an impossible task in such a volume anyway. Other aspects of emperors could have been addressed, some of these pointed to by the volume itself. Despite the desire to give emperors as much attention as empresses, it is clear that empresses need to be discussed too in relation to their male counterparts, given for instance the significance of Constantinian women highlighted by Humphries, and the Amorian Theodora by Prieto Domínguez. It would have been interesting to consider gender further too, for instance in relation to both Pulcheria and Basil II not getting married. Byzantinists do not agonise over the fact that imperial women might not get married; this surely tells us something about gender attitudes within Byzantium as well as the gender attitudes of those who study it. No one, to my knowledge, has suggested that Pulcheria had same-sex desires. Ceremonial features strongly in the volume, and certain rituals merit more attention, such as coronation, which was touched on by Kyriakidis. The court setting and personnel of the emperor is also an important subject and could have received further attention; for instance, the volume features no discussion of the emperor's relationship with eunuchs, ironically enough, though Basil the *parakoimomenos* does surface in relation to the key manuscript of the *Book of Cermonies* as well as his role in the reign of his great-nephew Basil II. The possible role of the emperor as author does appear in the volume, but could have been discussed further.[12] On the other hand, many of these aspects are familiar ones and can be accessed elsewhere.[13] More significant is that the volume features some key running themes. Dynasty, unsurprisingly, is a particular thread, and chimes with the recent notable increased interest in this aspect of emperors.[14] Likewise, ideals of rulership come to the fore: the political, military and religious roles the emperor was expected to play feature in many of the chapters. Above all, the volume deals time and again with images of emperors – textual and visual – rather than necessarily emperors of flesh and blood. Byzantium was saturated with the idea of the emperor, conscious of its identity as the Roman empire. As such, the emperor is a subject that deserves and requires further detailed attention. It is hoped that this volume will both encourage and assist this.

Notes

1 James 2001: ix.
2 Published in 1977 with a second edition in 1992.
3 Magdalino, ed. 1994.
4 See for instance Connor 2004, and Kalavrezou, ed. 2003.
5 See also Tougher 2010.
6 Millar 1992: ix.
7 Hopkins 1978: 186, observed in his review, 'The book is called *The Emperor in the Roman World* and yet I get from it no feeling of what it was like to be emperor, none of their hopes, ambitions, fears'.
8 Millar 1992: ix.
9 Millar 1992: 636–652.
10 Millar 1992: 638–639. On criticism of Millar's 'complete omission of military matters [which] results in serious distortion', see Hopkins 1978: 180.
11 Millar 1992: 638–640. On the question of the image of the emperor he notes in particular the subsequent important work of Zanker 1988.
12 See for instance Baker-Brian and Tougher, eds. 2012, on Julian as emperor and author.
13 For instance, on the Byzantine court see Maguire, ed. 1997.
14 Witness, for instance, Duindam 2016, and the workshop on 'Medieval Dynasties' held at the University of Birmingham from 25 to 26 May 2018.

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Part I

DYNASTY

Imperial families


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1

FAMILY, DYNASTY, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEGITIMACY FROM AUGUSTUS TO THE THEODOSIANS[1]

Mark Humphries

Introduction: The protest of Dagalaifus

Early 364 was an uncertain time for the Roman empire. The emperor Jovian had just died in unforeseen circumstances on 17 February after a reign of barely eight months. His predecessor, Julian, had died on the night of 26 June 363 having been fatally wounded in a skirmish with the Persians. Julian's own reign had been short, his predecessor Constantius II having passed away on 3 November 361.[2] Amid the anxieties caused by this rapid sequence of imperial exits,[3] a cabal of officers at Nicaea chose to elevate the Pannonian officer Valentinian to the throne at Nicaea (although at the time Valentinian himself was absent at Ancyra). When Valentinian arrived in person, a decision was made to postpone his elevation, lest it occur on the inauspicious bisextile day (24 February).[4] Then, on the morning of 25 February, at a tribunal outside Nicaea, a show of an election took place to confirm Valentinian as emperor. This done, Valentinian prepared to address the assembled troops, but at that moment events threatened to turn ugly. The soldiers, clashing their shields, demanded that Valentinian appoint an imperial colleague: clearly, the recent sequence of imperial deaths – and particularly the sudden demise of Jovian just a week earlier – was playing on everyone's mind, and they wanted some guarantee of continuity should their new emperor suddenly expire.[5]

Only Valentinian's inspiring presence was able to forestall an outbreak of violent unrest, but the question of an imperial colleague was not going to go away. It plainly dominated discussions between the emperor and his *consistorium* over the following days, during which time, it seems, Valentinian was clearly in favour of elevating his brother Valens.[6] We are told by Ammianus Marcellinus of one discussion in which the *comes domesticorum* Dagalaifus counselled the emperor: 'If you love your relatives, most excellent emperor, you have a brother – but if you love the state, you should invest somebody else.'[7] Valentinian apparently reacted with barely suppressed rage, but he remained determined to have his brother as co-emperor: he immediately promoted him to the position of *tribunus stabuli*; later, on 28 March, at the Hebdomon outside Constantinople, he formally invested Valens as co-ruler.

The bold argument made by Dagalaifus, and the simmering anger it induced in Valentinian, are instructive in various ways about the dynamics of Roman imperial succession. On the one hand, the events of early spring 364 suggest that when it came to the appointment of co-emperors, and therefore of potential successors, familial relationship was a major consideration. On the other hand, it shows that what might be called a dynastic principle could be contested. While the words ascribed to Dagalaifus may not, of course, be genuine, they became celebrated *mots justes*, and were reiterated by the Byzantine historians Leo the Grammarian and Cedrenus in their accounts of these events.[8] But whatever their historicity, Dagalaifus' comments reflect a tension in thinking about who made the best imperial colleague and potential successor, and the role in such choices of family and dynastic connections.

This chapter will explore the consequences of this debate about dynastic legitimacy for imperial successions between the first century and the fifth.[9] It will begin by examining how, in the first two centuries of the Principate, the imperial office came to be defined as something that could be inherited, and therefore the extent to which a dynastic principle can be said to have existed. The second half of my discussion will trace developments into late antiquity, showing how emperors sought to affirm their legitimacy through the creation of dynasties: these could be both authentically biological and artificially constructed, either through adoption or through some other form of association, sometimes asserted retrospectively. As we will see, there was often no clear distinction between bloodline and constructed dynasties, and espousals of dynastic legitimacy often combined elements of both. If that sounds a somewhat messy reality, then it needs to be recalled furthermore that an emperor's legitimacy depended on more than just the blood that coursed through his veins: other achievements in the military, administrative, and religious spheres were important too, as was the opinion of the different sections of imperial society (such as nobles, the Roman people, soldiers, and provincials) who acquiesced in an emperor's rule.[10] In other words, it was not just enough for an emperor to receive appointment; his legitimacy had to be accepted by others, so that proclamations of legitimacy were often made in contexts in which they could be contested, not least by credible rivals for the throne. Amid this complex nexus of considerations, I will argue that the fourth century saw renewed emphasis on dynastic succession, likely in response to the upheavals of the third century, and the reverberations of this reassertion of dynasticism were to be felt in later, Byzantine centuries.[11]

Dynasty, office, and succession from Augustus to the Severans

In the epilogue of his magisterial examination of the role of the emperor in the Roman world, Fergus Millar remarked upon the essential difficulties of defining the imperial office.[12] According to the Augustan settlements after the late Republican civil wars, the emperor's position was defined obliquely as an amalgamation of traditional magistracies, although Augustus himself studiously omitted any explicit mention that the holding of such executive offices concurrently by a single individual was unprecedented.[13] Similarly, it is clear that the

emperor was quite unlike even the most powerful commanders under the late Republic, who had been hide-bound by constitutional proprieties: the emperor, in spite of all protests to the contrary in texts like Augustus' *Res Gestae* or Pliny's *Panegyricus* on Trajan, was not.[14] This had significant ramifications for issues of the succession and the legitimacy of any successor. At one level, it was not immediately clear how a personal position carved out by Octavian-Augustus in the last stages of the civil wars, and consolidated by grants to him of extraordinary magisterial power from the senate and people, could be passed on intact to any successor.[15] Yet this direct transference was precisely what Augustus sought to achieve, by investing a string of potential successors, from Marcellus onwards, with a concentration of magistracies based on his own.[16] Some titles came to have specific connotations for designating heirs, such as *princeps iuventutis*, first accorded to Augustus' grandsons Gaius and Lucius, and subsequently used by emperors down to the Severan dynasty to mark out potential successors.[17]

At another level, such magistracies were not deemed adequate in themselves to mark out a successor: from the outset, arrangements of kinship and familial adoption were deployed to stress a close personal link between these individuals and Augustus himself. His nephew Marcellus, his grandsons Gaius and Lucius, and his stepson Tiberius were all adopted as his sons, while such connections were made stronger by marrying his daughter Julia successively to Marcellus, Marcus Agrippa, and Tiberius. In that sense, this desire for a close family connection resembled the ad hoc arrangements made by Augustus himself (as Octavian) in the wake of Julius Caesar's murder in 44 BC. He sought, for example, to associate himself with his great-uncle by adopting Caesar's name – much to the chagrin of Cicero.[18] It is clear, moreover, that such an inheritance was expressed also in symbolic terms through his compliance in the deification of Caesar and his insistence on his status as *divi filius*.[19] From the very outset, therefore, legitimacy could be conferred from one generation to the next through a variety of arrangements that went beyond the mere award of magisterial powers.[20]

The implications of this for the behaviour of other early emperors can be seen in various ways that stress the creation of dynastic links to articulate the transition from one principate to the next. One was the assumption of the names and titles of Caesar and Augustus as *praenomina imperatoris*. At first these could be regarded as the patrimony of the Julian and Claudian clans, albeit through complex adoption procedures rather than direct succession from father to son (and in the case of Claudius, he preferred his adopted son Nero over his biological son Britannicus). The death of Nero in 68 introduced a period of uncertainty after nearly a century of rule by one dynasty (however loosely it had been configured), a point drawn out in the speech Tacitus gives to Galba at the point of his elevation.[21] In the civil wars that followed, the assumption of the titles Caesar and Augustus by Galba, Otho, and Vespasian (but curiously not by Vitellius) indicates a blurring between family name and title.[22] Indeed, the award of imperial names was a central feature of the legal procedures by which, in the first century, emperors were awarded their powers by the senate.[23] Under the Flavians, moreover, we get a further

development, as the name/title ‘Caesar’ was used to mark out Vespasian’s sons Titus and Domitian as potential successors.[24]

The assassination of Domitian in 96 was followed by the appointment of Nerva, after whom came a string of emperors usually designated as ‘adoptive’. While there was certainly no family relationship between Nerva and Trajan,[25] there were such links between Trajan and Hadrian, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, and Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.[26] They were, however, not direct links of patrilineal descent, and they were reinforced by processes of adoption that made family connections more explicit, and by the use of the imperial names Augustus and Caesar to make their political intent unambiguous. There remained, however, some messiness, especially when a single successor had not been designated, as in the case of the joint succession of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus at Antoninus Pius’ death in 161.[27] Other actions reinforced the connections between the different generations of emperors, such as when Antoninus Pius persuaded the senate not to refuse to deify his predecessor Hadrian in 138.[28]

Nevertheless, it is striking that when one of these so-called adoptive emperors did produce a son who was in a position to succeed him, as Marcus did with Commodus, that was assumed to be the natural outcome. For the last three years of Marcus’ reign, Commodus shared magistracies with him uncontroversially.[29] What we can see here is a ready acceptance of dynastic succession: whatever misgivings were expressed about Commodus – as, for instance, by Cassius Dio in his famous epitaph on Marcus Aurelius[30] – there never seems to have been any suggestion that he should not succeed, only that he was a major disappointment when he did. This suggests that by the Antonine period the notion of dynastic connections as conferring some degree of legitimacy was becoming entrenched. Indeed, already under Antoninus Pius, the Alexandrian historian Appian, in his *Civil Wars*, had singled out the establishment of a family dynasty that could succeed to the throne as one of Augustus’ signal achievements.[31]

In his turn, Commodus was overthrown on 31 December 192, thereby plunging the empire into another round of civil war from which Septimius Severus was to emerge victorious. Once again, we find the assertion of dynasty as an essential component in the construction of legitimacy by the new emperor, even if it was by now unmistakably clear that the real source of imperial power was the support of the legions.[32] At the outset of his bid for power, Severus presented himself as the avenger of the short-lived Pertinax, Commodus’ immediate successor. Once he had taken Rome, Severus staged an elaborate mock funeral for an effigy of Pertinax on the Campus Martius; it culminated with the release from the pyre of an eagle that symbolised Pertinax’s deification, and so conferred on Severus that aura of divine sanction.[33] Soon after, however, we find Severus appealing to the authority inherent in the names of the Antonine emperors. His elder son Bassianus, better known now as Caracalla, was redesignated Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, suggesting that far from being an entirely new dynasty who had acquired the throne through bloodshed, the Severans were instead part of a continuum stretching back a generation or more.[34] Even the brief interlude of

non-Severan rule under Macrinus (217–218) was not devoid of dynastic claims. While the historian Herodian gives Macrinus a speech in which he questions the very basis of dynastic succession,[35] Macrinus himself – by representing himself in bearded Severan guise on his coinage and elevating his son Diadumenianus to the rank of Caesar – clearly saw the merits of dynastic underpinnings to legitimacy.[36]

The readiness with which emperors from Tiberius to the Severans used the titles Caesar and Augustus, together with that noticeable preference for some form of dynastic succession (albeit in many cases artificially constructed) also indicates a creeping acceptance of the imperial office that rendered obsolete the pandering to Republican sensibilities evident in Augustus' *Res Gestae*. It was a circumstance recognised by even that most traditional of Rome's political institutions, the senate. When the senate made arrangements for the transfer of power to Vespasian by, at the latest, 9 January 70 in the so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (with retrospective ratification to cover his enactments in the months since his proclamation in the East in mid-69),[37] they sought to define his position not in terms of Republican precedents, but rather in terms of the powers held by earlier *principes*. But what is significant here is that the list of precedents is evidently selective. Augustus is there as the archetype of emperor, and other aspects of Vespasian's rule, such as his construction of the Colosseum and enforcement of the *disciplina ordinum* in seating arrangements in the theatre, similarly appealed to Augustan models.[38] Explicit mention is also made of Tiberius and Claudius. Strikingly absent are the Julio-Claudian tyrants Gaius and Nero, and the ephemeral emperors of the post-Neronian civil war, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Yet this reflects a self-conscious and selective construction of legitimate precedent: there must have been similar grants of powers to Gaius in 37 and Nero in 54, but these were now passed over in silence.[39] A hint of the situation's contingency can be deduced from efforts, simultaneous with the enactment of the law granting Vespasian powers, to rehabilitate Galba's memory,[40] which suggests that the new emperor and the senate were exploring multiple options to assert Vespasian's legitimacy. This demonstrates how at crisis points – not only in 68–69, but also in 96–98 and 192–193 – the assertion of legitimate succession was something to be negotiated by various interest groups, including the senate. Thereafter, the picture of the senate playing a formal role in imperial appointments becomes increasingly sketchy, even if emperors down to the third century reiterated the trope of aspiring to live according to the laws.[41] If Appian in the second century saw dynastic succession as entirely natural, then he was clearly reflecting the political realities of his own day.

Crises and restorations: Towards late-antique dynasticism

As we move through the Severan period, the absolutist position of the emperor becomes ever more apparent: it is entirely apposite that this age should have produced from the lawyer Ulpian the maxim that 'whatever pleases the emperor has the force of law'.[42] Yet, only a decade after the jurist had spoken imperial authority

was thrown into disarray by the political upheavals that followed Alexander Severus' murder in 235. The next fifty years were ones of real political crisis, with more than twenty claimants to the imperial throne. The period saw, however, the continuation of trends that had originated in the first two centuries. One was the increasing militarisation of the imperial office in terms of both the largely Danubian frontiersmen who occupied the office, and how the position was conferred by the soldiery, even if the nicety of informing the senate would continue to be observed.[43] Another feature that continues is the determination of some emperors to create dynasties: the joint rule of the Decii (249–251), of Valerian and Gallienus (253–260), and of Carus, Carinus, and Numerian (283–284) all indicate that dynasty-making remained integral to prospects for the succession.[44] As in earlier periods, however, such dynastic pretensions could encompass entirely fictive efforts to hark back to earlier exemplars of imperial rule, creating, as it were, a sort of dynasty of office. Decius, for instance, issued a sequence of coins from Milan honouring earlier deified emperors, from Augustus to Alexander Severus.[45] Later, Dexippus records a diplomatic encounter between the emperor Aurelian (270–275) and the Juthungi in which the emperor sought to terrify the barbarian envoys by greeting them on a tribunal where he was surrounded not only by military standards, but also by portraits of earlier emperors.[46] In the uncertain times of the third century, we see a continued hankering for a combination of bloodline and constructed dynastic successions.

In the end, order was restored following the accession of Diocletian in 284. But his remarkable success could hardly have been foreseen; nor could the system, and effects, of the Tetrarchy that evolved under his tutelage over the next decade. It is also too easy to regard Diocletian's Tetrarchic experiment as an abrogation of established dynastic principles in the construction of imperial legitimacy and the arrangements for the succession, a feature that struck contemporaries such as the panegyrist of 289 who remarked that Diocletian and Maximian were 'brothers in virtue, which is a surer bond than any tie of blood'.[47] Certainly the Tetrarchy in its developed form was experimental: having a college of four emperors went beyond any principle of collegiate rulership seen hitherto, even if the structure of a senior emperor with the rank of *Augustus* assisted by deputies called *Caesares* had a recent precedent in the joint rule of Carus, Carinus, and Numerian. And yet, traditional elements were embedded in the system. The Tetrarchs were connected with each other by marriage alliances: the Caesar Galerius married Diocletian's daughter Valeria, while the Caesar Constantius married Theodora, who was either the daughter or step-daughter of Diocletian's fellow Augustus Maximian.[48] Also, there is little reason to doubt that, until relatively late in Diocletian's reign, the son of the Caesar Constantius I, Constantine, was intended for the succession, as perhaps also was Maximian's son Maxentius.[49] Neither of these elements was incompatible with organisational and ideological novelties of the period.

Following the sudden death of Constantius I in 306, there was a dramatic reaffirmation of dynastic principles of succession and legitimacy, with the proclamations

of Constantine at York in July and Maxentius at Rome in October.[50] Subsequent propagandist efforts of Constantine affirmed his dynastic legitimacy by appealing, in slightly different ways at different times, to his kinship with his father Constantius, his father-in-law Maximian,[51] and, in a notorious twist, Claudius II Gothicus (268–270), which the panegyrist of 310 proclaimed made Constantine born to be emperor.[52] Following Constantine's victory over his erstwhile brother-in-law Maxentius in 312, it was necessary to impugn Maxentius' paternity precisely because the dynastic underpinnings of imperial legitimacy remained important.[53] Constantine's later arrangements for the shape of imperial power, first with Licinius and his son, and then with his own sons, underscores the importance of these dynastic elements, not least with regard to the succession.[54] Of course, there was room for endless refinement: Licinius and his son did not long outlast the their civil war against Constantine in 324; and even Constantine's eldest son Crispus, marked out as a likely successor by his elevation as Caesar in 317, was removed from future plans after his fall from grace and execution in 326.[55] This manipulation of dynastic niceties was to reach its violent denouement in the summer of 337 when, following Constantine's death, his son Constantius II engineered his own succession along with that of his blood brothers Constantine II and Constans by brutally doing away with almost all members still surviving from collateral branches of the family of Constantius I via his second wife (and thus Constantine I's step-mother) Theodora.[56] In terms of reinforcing the sense of dynastic entitlement, the younger Constantius' move was successful: when, within two years of the event, Eusebius of Caesaraea came to describe Constantine's plans for the succession, the emphasis was on the three surviving brothers; the other branches of the family, including Crispus, had already disappeared from view.[57]

While the late empire saw the continuation and elaboration of tropes of legitimacy inherited from the Principate, it also saw innovation. Just as Augustus had provided an archetype for emperors of the early Principate, so too did Constantine for the new Christian empire. Under his sons, this was particularly important given the bloodline – though it could also provoke opportunities for rivalries between the sons, as happened when Constans overthrew Constantine II in 340.[58] This was particularly important under Constantius II who became, following Magnentius' ousting of Constans in 350, the sole-surviving son of Constantine. Emphasising the importance of the connection between father and son was especially pronounced in Christian circles, where many hoped that Constantius would continue the beneficence to the Church begun by his father. Those who sought to curry favour with Constantius strove to emphasise parallels between his enjoyment of God's support and that vouchsafed to his father; equally, opponents caught out by Constantius' support for what they deemed heretical forms of Christianity sought to stress precisely how different the son was from the father.[59] Constantinian symbolism and connections could be claimed by opponents of the regime in their own bids for legitimacy. Thus the usurpers Magnentius (350–353) and Vetranio (350) issued coins bearing the chi-rho monogram, which had become established under Constantine as the emperor's special sigil.[60] Magnentius' Constantinian

connections were stressed also by his wife, Justina, who came from one of those branches of Constantine's family that Constantius II had preferred to think of as illegitimate, but who nevertheless features as an important figure in efforts at dynasty building throughout the fourth century (and, through her descendants, into the fifth).[61]

Connections to Constantine and his family were most keenly felt at Constantinople. Until late in the fourth century, the city hosted an annual celebration in which a silver statue of Constantine was paraded through its streets; it is interesting to note that the ritual was only suspended as part of an effort to establish the Theodosian dynasty's position in the city.[62] Connections between later emperors and the city's founder were also articulated by their burial in the mausoleum first constructed there for Constantine himself, or in the associated church of the Holy Apostles: not only were many eastern emperors of the fourth and later centuries buried there (or in precincts associated with it), but the bodies of emperors who had died in the West (such as Valentinian I and Theodosius I) were embalmed and transported to Constantinople for entombment.[63] Imperial beneficence to Christianity could also be construed as an act that connected later emperors with Constantine, as when bishops at the sixth session of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 repeatedly acclaimed Marcian as the 'New Constantine'.[64]

Also at Chalcedon, another link to Constantinian innovations revived in the Theodosian age was advertised in the elaborate acclamations of Marcian's empress Pulcheria as a new manifestation of Constantine's mother, Helena, who had established herself as a model of imperial Christian piety and generosity.[65] In her own lifetime, Helena (as well as, for a time, her daughter-in-law Fausta) had been honoured with the title of Augusta, which seems to have been used in imitation of the designation of Livia under Augustus. The title fell into abeyance after Constantine's death, but was revived later in the fourth century for Theodosius I's empress Flaccilla, who was honoured with coins and statues in eastern cities. It would be revived further for future generations of Theodosian women in both East and West.[66]

The Constantinian age also provided a set of circumstances that reaffirmed the importance of dynasty and bloodline in considerations of legitimacy and succession. Stretching from Constantius I's elevation as Caesar in 293 to Julian's demise in Persia in 363, the dynasty had held sway for seventy years – longer than any family since the Julio-Claudians, and long enough, I suspect, for a deep and abiding sense of dynastic loyalty to develop, in some quarters at any rate. Certainly, the dynastic mythology of the Constantinian line became firmly entrenched: in the late-350s, for instance, we find Julian reiterating the claims first made by the panegyrist of 310 that the family descended from Claudius Gothicus.[67] Three features of the immediately post-Constantinian period demonstrate the power of the dynasty's mystique. One was the usurpation of Procopius against Valens in 365: as part of his bid for power, Procopius seems to have asserted his connections, tenuous though they were, with Julian and, therefore, with the Constantinian dynasty.[68] Secondly, at some stage early in his reign, Valentinian I repudiated

his first wife so that he could wed Justina, the sometime spouse of Magnentius, with her links to the Constantinian family.[69] Finally, Constantius II's posthumous daughter Constantia was exploited for political ends, both by Procopius, who had hoped to use her to buttress his Constantinian associations, and by Valentinian I, who married her to his son Gratian.[70]

This reaffirmed primacy of dynasty and bloodline under the Constantinians helps to explain the nature of Valentinian's actions in appointing Valens as co-Augustus in 364: the old dynasty was gone, and the establishment of a new one could be regarded as necessary.[71] Moreover, Valentinian was to repeat the process later in 367, when he fell seriously ill in Gaul, and saw to the elevation of his son Gratian, then only eight years old, as co-emperor in the West, this time with the rank of Augustus.[72] The later history of the Valentinianic dynasty seems to underscore the importance of these considerations, even if the precise plans of Valentinian were not wholly adhered to after his death from a sudden seizure at Brigetio on the Danube in November 375. On that occasion, generals on the spot judged that Gratian, who had been left at Trier when his father marched to the Balkans earlier in the year, was too remote to provide meaningful leadership to the troops on the barbarian-ravaged Danubian frontier. That some sections of the high command contemplated elevating to the throne candidates from outside the family shows how precarious the dominance of the dynasty could be. In the end, however, dynastic considerations prevailed as the forces on the Danube promoted Valentinian I's younger son Valentinian II (who, with his mother Justina, was conveniently close to hand) as successor – and one not likely to provoke a hostile reaction from his half-brother Gratian.[73]

When, later, the family of Theodosius joined the imperial college in January 379 as emperor in the East, dynastic niceties were part of the arrangement. The reputation of Theodosius' father, who had fallen victim to struggles for influence at Valentinian's death in 375, was rehabilitated.[74] Intermarriage with the family of Valentinian I and Gratian was, latterly, another feature of the arrangement: in the context of his arrangements to restore Valentinian II to the West and overthrow the usurper Magnus Maximus in 388, Theodosius married his second wife, Valentinian II's sister (and Gratian's half-sister) Galla, the daughter of Valentinian I and Justina.[75] Much later, in 437, the marriage of Valentinian III to Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius II, similarly buttressed dynastic principles and, at the same time, the unity of the two *partes imperii*.[76] Furthermore, by virtue of Justina's connections with the Constantinian family, such marriages strengthened connections not only across space, but also time, meaning that it is possible to trace a set of dynastic interconnections between imperial clans from the time of Constantius I down to the fifth century.[77] Such arrangements were underscored even after death by imperial burials: in the East, emperors of the Theodosian dynasty were entombed at the complex of the Constantinian mausoleum and the church of the Holy Apostles; meanwhile, in the West, a new dynastic mausoleum rose beside the great imperial church of St. Peter's on the Vatican.[78]

The success with which dynastic succession became accepted perhaps explains one of the striking features of late-fourth and fifth century history: the advent of child emperors.[79] At the times of their succession to Valentinian I, Gratian was sixteen years old (and had been only eight when made co-Augustus in 367) and Valentinian II four; Theodosius I's sons Arcadius and Honorius were eighteen and ten respectively when their father died in 395 (and had been elevated as Augusti when they were six and eight); and when Arcadius died in 408, Theodosius II had only just turned seven (having been raised to the rank of Augustus when he was a year old). By this stage, many of the executive functions of the emperor had devolved to powerful courtiers, most celebratedly the *magistri militum*. That dynastic connection rather than administrative or military competence was the crucial factor in the succession has no clearer demonstration than the accession of the six-year-old Valentinian III in Italy in 425, after a period of usurpation and civil war. By now, the emperor was increasingly a symbolic figurehead; but for that symbolism to work, dynastic considerations were paramount. But we might be wary of seeing this as too striking an innovation: after all the sons of Constantine I had been relatively young men in their late teens and early twenties when they succeeded in 337 – and they had been even younger when they had been promoted as Caesars.[80]

The interconnected dynasty of Valentinian and Theodosius was, like that of Constantine, long-lived, holding sway in the East until Theodosius II's accidental death in 450 and in the West until Valentinian III's murder in 455: all told, a period of just over ninety years. Events in both East and West during the 450s suggest an effort to continue with emperors made legitimate through dynastic connections. At Constantinople, Theodosius II was succeeded by Marcian, the choice of Theodosius' sister Pulcheria, whom he also married.[81] At first this was regarded as unacceptable by Valentinian III, though in 452 he finally acknowledged Marcian's legitimacy.[82] Pulcheria's role in these matters underscores the continuing importance of female members of the imperial family as vectors of legitimacy: her connections resemble those of her aunt Galla Placidia in the West, who had played an important role in buttressing Theodosian dynastic politics through the elevations of her husband Constantius III in 421 and their son Valentinian III in 424–425, and whose importance was recognised through being granted the title of Augusta.[83] Imperial women remained important when Valentinian himself was murdered in 455: there was an effort by the new (and only briefly successful) emperor in Italy, Petronius Maximus, to affirm legitimacy by marrying Valentinian's widow Eudoxia, and by attaching his son Palladius to an unnamed daughter of the former emperor.[84] Thereafter, various circumstances in the West, such as political instability and the greater political clout of leading generals (one of whom, Ricimer, felt he could rule without an emperor in 465–467),[85] meant that there were to be no further efforts at dynastic arrangements until the advent of the barbarian successor states – but by this stage we have entered a new world beyond the scope of this chapter. In the East, however, notions that emperors could be born to the purple persisted, even if they were not necessarily followed in practice.[86]

Conclusion: Dynasticism and its discontents

This chapter has argued that dynastic considerations were central to Roman imperial succession arrangements from the first century to the fifth, with a notable upsurge in late antiquity with the Constantinian and Valentinianic-Theodosian houses. The persistence of the phenomenon is striking, given that until the fourth century very few emperors had surviving sons who could succeed them, and that there were many other competing forms of asserting legitimacy. It has been suggested furthermore that the longevity of the lines of Constantine I, Valentinian I, and Theodosius I served to underscore the importance of dynastic succession to the extent that emperors without obvious administrative or military competence could ascend to the throne, a situation unthinkable in earlier centuries. Yet it is also clear that there were many different ways of constructing dynastic legitimacy, encompassing biological kinship, adoption, constructed ancestry, and often a combination of two or more of these factors; moreover, dynastic claims usually operated alongside other markers of legitimacy, including military success and religious rectitude. But even if dynastic concerns were part of a wider constellation of considerations when it came to choosing an emperor, they soon became entrenched. A sure sign of just how entrenched they were is offered by the debates surrounding it that we have seen, for instance, at Galba's accession in 68 or that of Macrinus in 217. This is also the case with the anecdote about Dagalaifus with which this discussion began: it was only possible to suggest an alternative form of succession in counterpoint to the assumption that dynastic succession was the norm.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Shaun Tougher for his invitation to address the Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies and, subsequently, to contribute to this volume. In Cardiff the paper benefitted from discussion with the participants, particularly Meaghan McEvoy and John Vanderspoel. An anonymous referee offered a chastening report, highlighting my embarrassing blind-spots, and I hope to have addressed their concerns. None of those mentioned are responsible for the flaws that remain.

2 The basic chronological details (and sources) can be found in Kienast 1996: 314–317, 323–329.

3 On the mood of the time, see Amm. Marc. 26.1.3: *Hac volubilium casuum diritate exitu luctuoso finita, obituque intervallato trium brevi tempore principum*.

4 Amm. Marc. 26.1.7; 26.2.1.

5 Amm. Marc. 26.2.3–4. For this sequence of events, see Lenski 2002: 21–25.

6 This much is clear from Dagalaifus' interjection, and from Valentinian's angry response to it: Amm. Marc. 26.4.1–2; cf. den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, and Teitler 2007: 78–79.

7 Amm. Marc. 26.4.1: *Dagalaifus tunc equestris militiae rector respondit fidentius 'si tuos amas,' inquit, 'imperator optime, habes fratrem, si rem publicam, quaere quem vestigas.'*

8 Leo Gramm., *Chron*.: 97; Cedrenus, *Chron.* 1.541. The suggestion of Bleckmann 1995: 89–91, that the common source is the lost *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus seems unlikely: for a discussion of the Byzantine tradition, see Cameron 2011: 659–665. See also den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, and Teitler 2007: 78–79.

9 The most recent overview of the whole subject is Hekster 2015.
10 A good example is provided by Suet., *Dom.* 23.1, indicating the different responses to the murder of Domitian by the senate and people of Rome (who welcomed it) and the troops (who demanded vengeance on the assassins).
11 Cf. Börm 2015: while I concur with him that the Constantinian period saw renewed emphasis on dynastic succession, I would see it as having been more important throughout the Principate than he does.
12 Millar 1992: 616–618.
13 *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 6.1; 34.3.
14 On the relationship between emperor and law, see Brunt 1977: 107–116.
15 Börm 2015: 240. This circumstance might render plausible the public display of hesitation attributed by Velleius Paterculus 2.124.2 to Tiberius when he was offered the position of *princeps* in AD 14.
16 Lacey 1996: 190–209.
17 Horster 2011.
18 Cic., *ad Atticum* 14.12.2.
19 Syme 1939: 202.
20 For the basic principles, see Hekster 2015: 2–25.
21 Tac., *Hist.* 1.16.
22 Brunt 1977: 100 n. 27.
23 Talbert 1984: 354–358.
24 Horster 2011: 94.
25 For the complexities of Trajan's succession to Nerva, see Hekster 2014.
26 Full discussion in Birley 1987: 232–248.
27 Birley 1987: 240–241.
28 *HA Hadrian* 27.2.
29 Birley 1987: 195–196, 199–201, 207–210.
30 Dio 71.36.3–4.
31 Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 1.5.
32 The classic statement of this reality comes in Septimius Severus' dying instructions to his sons that they 'be harmonious, enrich the troops, and despise all the rest' (Dio 76.15.2); cf. the cautious analysis of Campbell 1984: 401–414.
33 Dio 75.3–5.
34 Birley 1988: 117, 156, 160–161.
35 Herodian 5.1.6–7.
36 Coins: Zimmermann 1992: 220–221. Diadumenianus as Caesar: Dio 79.19. Even in the speech described by Herodian 5.1.8 in which Macrinus condemns dynastic successors like Commodus and Caracalla, he still vows to behave like Marcus Aurelius or Pertinax.
37 For the date: Brunt 1977: 104–105.
38 See Suet., *Vesp.* 9.
39 Brunt 1977: 98–99.
40 Tac., *Hist.* 4.40.1; but the mood seems to have turned against Galba at a later date: Suet., *Galba* 23. Cf. Brunt 1977: 104–105.
41 Thus Alexander Severus in 233: *licet enim lex imperii sollemnibus iuris imperatorem solverit, nihil tamen tam proprium imperii est, ut legibus vivere* (*Cod. Just*. 6.23.3).
42 Ulpian: *Dig.* 1.4.1 pr.: *quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem*; for the context: Campbell 1984: 410–411.
43 Aur. Vict., *Caes*. 37.5–7, traces the change to Tacitus' elevation in 276: *Abhinc militaris potentia convaluit ac senatui imperium creandique ius principis ereptum ad nostram memoriam*.
44 See especially Horster 2007: 296–303, for numismatic evidence for dynastic assertions in the third century.

45 Ando 2000: 207.
46 Dexippus *FGrH* 100 F 24.
47 *Pan. Lat*. 10(2).9.3: *quod omni consanguinitate certius est, virtutibus fratres*.
48 For Theodora and Maximian's complex marital history, see Barnes 1982: 33–34.
49 Barnes 2011: 46–49.
50 Börm 2015: 246–251.
51 For the explicitly dynastic aspirations here, see *Pan. Lat.* 7(6).2.2 and 2.5, with Börm 2015: 247.
52 *Pan. Lat*. 6(7).2.5: *quod imperator es <natus>*.
53 Humphries 2008: 90–93.
54 Barnes 2011: 104, 163–168.
55 Barnes 2011: 146–150.
56 Burgess 2008.
57 Eus., *VC* 4.51–2.
58 These problems are neatly delineated by Börm 2015: 251–254.
59 Humphries 1997.
60 See Humphries forthcoming.
61 Woods 2004 offers a summary; for more detail (albeit some of it speculative) see Chausson 2007.
62 Croke 2010: 249.
63 Grierson 1962: 3–26; Johnson 2009: 121, 201, 215–216.
64 Price and Gaddis 2005, vol. 2: 214, 216, 240.
65 Price and Gaddis 2005, vol. 2: 240.
66 Holum 1982: 28–44.
67 Julian, *Or.* 1.6d; 2.51c.
68 Börm 2015: 257.
69 Woods 2004.
70 *PLRE* 1: 221, Constantia 2.
71 The reign of Jovian might be too short to see any efforts at dynasty building (Börm 2015: 257), although the designation of his infant son Varronianus as *consul ordinarius* in 364 perhaps hints at the germ of a plan.
72 McEvoy 2013: 48–53.
73 For the succession to Valentinian I, see Kelly 2013.
74 Symm., *Or.* 9.3; 43.2.
75 Zos. 4.44.1–4; analysis in McLynn 1994: 292–293.
76 Matthews 2000: 1–5.
77 Chausson 2007: 166, fig. 18.
78 Grierson 1962: 26; Johnson 2009: 167–174.
79 For what follows, see McEvoy 2013.
80 Constantine II was only a few months old when he was made Caesar in 317, and just 20 at his accession as Augustus in 337 (*PLRE* 1: 223, Constantius 3); Constantius was born in 317, became Caesar at 7 in 324, and was 19 on the death of his father (*PLRE* 1: 226, Constantius 8). Constans was likely only 13 when proclaimed Caesar in 333, and 17 in 337 (*PLRE* 1: 220, Constans 3).
81 Holum 1982: 208–209.
82 Humphries 2012: 173.
83 For Galla Placidia, see most recently Sivan 2011: 86–93. On Theodosian women more generally, Connor 2004: 45–72, offers a good overview; Holum 1982 discusses the issue in detail.
84 Hydatius, *Chron.* 155 Burgess = 162 Mommsen.
85 MacGeorge 2002.
86 Börm 2015: 259–262.

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2

THE SHIFTING IMPORTANCE OF DYNASTY IN HERACLIAN IDEOLOGY

Mike Humphreys

Historians delight in periodisation, and probably no method for doing so is as popular as dividing time by ruling families. Byzantinists are keen practitioners, with among others our Macedonian, Komnenian and Palaiologan eras. Most general histories of Byzantium shall somewhere have a timeline of emperors, organised by dynasty. Take for instance *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*, where the reigns of emperors are bracketed into: 'Family ties constituting a "dynasty"', with a note that, '"Dynasty" is here used as a loose yet convenient label for sequences of rulers linked by ties of blood, marriage, adoption or co-emperorship.'[1] This is a perfectly reasonable definition. However, it neatly highlights the problem with categorising time by imperial family – aside from the more general issue of whether emperors warrant such prominence in the first place – namely to what extent did dynasties actually matter? Did Byzantine emperors project their rule through a familial lens? Did they seek or find legitimacy through dynastic association and lineage, potentially increasing with each successive generation, or through reference to a founding figure? Or were the links between generations of an imperial family weak, with individual emperors primarily legitimating their rule through referents external to the dynasty? Did Byzantines know or care that their current ruler was a member of a ruling family who had held the throne for generations? The answer surely varied from period to period and emperor to emperor, in response to changing contexts. However, across the centuries of emperors two conflicting features can be noted.

First, and in distinct contrast to most of its neighbours, the imperial office never in theory became the preserve of one family.[2] More than that, the rich corpus of ideas and images to conceptualise emperors that Byzantium inherited rendered it all but impossible to turn the imperial office into a primarily dynastic one. Whether the emperor was God's vicegerent, Christ's co-ruler, an Old Testament King, a Hellenistic monarch, the law incarnate, or a Roman magistrate, legitimacy was attached to the office and the individual emperor. As Dagron puts it, 'there was nothing to justify the delegation of sovereignty to one family on a lasting basis'.[3] Roman, Christian and Hellenistic ideas all combined to maintain an idea of a state separate from the emperor, and an imperial office distinct

from its current incumbent and his family. Furthermore, acquiring that office was not achieved through inheritance, nor was acquisition limited to a particular bloodline. Rather the imperial office was elective.[4] Precisely who the electors were declared to be – God, the senate, the army, the people or some combination thereof – varied with the precise context of the situation and the source that communicated it, as did the ways in which emperors could obtain and display their legitimacy. What did not vary was the centrality of the concept of imperial election. That concept, and its corollary that legitimacy was acquired rather than inherited, opened the door for new men to seize the throne and become legitimate rulers. This relative openness had its advantages. It enabled a form of meritocracy whereby incompetent rulers could either be removed or side-lined. Yet it also offered significant opportunities for assassinations, coups and civil wars. This insecurity of dynastic tenure was noted by foreigners, and explains why in the millennium and a half that the imperial office existed only three families – the aforementioned Macedonians, Komnenians and Palaiologans – managed to hold the throne for more than a century.[5]

However, those tables of emperors also tell a truth; the vast majority of emperors were members of a dynasty. An emperor was expected to promote their son if they had one, and the norm was for the throne to pass to a family member, whether that familial relationship was based on blood, adoption or marriage.[6] If there was no suitable male heir, females could legitimate the transfer of power to a non-family member. For instance, when Theodosius II died in a hunting accident in 450, his imperious and virginal elder sister Pulcheria helped elect Marcian whom she promptly married.[7] In the first half of the eleventh century, Zoe would legitimate no fewer than three husbands as emperor, and another as an adopted son. When the latter, Michael V, attempted in 1042 to depose his adopted mother, the outraged Constantinopolitan mob crowned Zoe's sister Theodora, and forced both Zoe's reinstatement and Michael's deposition.[8] Briefly the sisters reigned together, and following the death of Zoe's last husband Theodora reigned alone. All of this was based on their position as the last scions of the Macedonian dynasty, daughters born to a reigning emperor in the palace. Evidently dynasty was not only normal, it was significant.

Moreover, both dynasty's normality and its significance gradually increased over the *longue durée* of the imperial office's existence. This can be measured by multiple yardsticks. For instance, the increasing prominence of imperial women glimpsed above marched in lockstep with their importance as the bearers of dynastic legitimacy.[9] Another measure is the increasing significance of imperial birth. While sons might expect to succeed fathers, it was only in the eighth century that the title *porphyrogennetos*, 'born in the purple', was attached to a child born of a ruling emperor.[10] This probably coincided with the creation of the Porphyra, a special porphyry clad chamber in the imperial palace where empresses would give birth.[11] These births and subsequent baptisms were also surrounded by ever more elaborate ceremonial.[12] Finally, one should also note the emergence of child emperors. In the early empire emperors were supposed to be active adults. Indeed, before the Severan dynasty the youngest Augustus on

accession had been the sixteen-year-old Nero. Even with the troubles of the third century and the rise of multiple emperorship, child Augusti remained a rarity. It was only from the mid-fourth century that children were frequently crowned as co-Augusti and child emperors were able to hold their thrones for significant periods.[13] Thanks to a lack of imperial children, this system went into abeyance for almost two centuries, before becoming regular once more from the seventh century onwards.[14] Indeed, by 776 Leo IV was noted as odd for *not* having yet crowned his five-year-old son.[15]

Therefore, throughout its existence the imperial office was both non-dynastic and heavily entwined with dynasty. Moreover, to oversimplify, in the years following the tumultuous changes of the seventh century dynasty became the norm and the use of family as at least one method to increase legitimacy was usual, whereas before 600 dynasty was rarer, looser and usually less potent a form of legitimating authority. In the 637 years between Octavian's proclamation as Augustus in 27 BC and Heraclius' accession in AD 610, 14 families had more than one member on the throne. Within these dynasties, marriage and adoption were at least as significant as blood. Of the *c.* 100 Augusti in this period, only 28 were the biological sons or grandsons of emperors, and only on 16 occasions did sons succeed fathers as senior emperor. In contrast, in the 843 years between 610 and 1453 nine dynasties ruled Byzantium.[16] The clear majority of emperors were the biological sons of emperors, and the most common transfer of imperial power was from father to son.[17]

That at first glance the seventh century was the watershed in the imperial office's evolution into a more 'Byzantine' form is hardly surprising. The century has long been identified as one of the most significant turning points in Byzantine history.[18] It also coincides almost perfectly with the reigns of the Heraclian emperors (r. 610–695, 705–711).[19] This coincidence led George Ostrogorsky to declare the Heraclians 'the first Byzantine dynasty in the real sense of the word'.[20] But were they? Setting to one side the question of when Byzantium begins, were the Heraclians 'the first Byzantine dynasty' in the sense that they so intertwined the imperial office with their family that they permanently reformulated the paradigm of emperorship towards dynasty? Were they indeed a 'dynasty in the real sense of the word', something more than a succession of related emperors?

Prima facie, one might expect the Heraclians to have constructed a dynasty. After all, they were remarkably good at producing emperors. Between 610 and 711 they held the imperial office for ninety-one years, the longest reigning dynasty since the adoptive emperors of the second century. Over this period six emperors over five generations ruled, while over six generations no fewer than ten Heraclians reigned as Augustus.[21] Few matched such longevity or ability to produce sons. Moreover, in Heraclius the family possessed a heroic founder, someone who defeated the barbarians, restored the Cross and saved the empire.[22] Thus one might expect Heraclius' five generations of progeny to emulate him and use his legend for legitimation, especially at points of dynastic crisis, such as the tumult following Heraclius' death in 641, the aftermath of Constans II's

assassination in 668/669, and Justinian II's ousting in 695 and subsequent return to power in 705.[23] Conversely, as Heraclius himself was a usurper, whose early reign in particular witnessed repeated military humiliations, and who was forced to campaign in person for long stretches, one would expect Heraclius to build up his dynastic legitimacy as a safeguard against rebellion.[24] Overall then it is probably reasonable to expect some degree of importance attached by the Heraclian emperors to their own dynasty, and for others to do so as well.

However, while there is ample evidence for how the Heraclians portrayed themselves over multiple media, understanding how others saw them is made extremely difficult by the paucity of our sources. In particular, there is a caesura in our surviving Greek historical texts after *c.* 630, meaning that most of our information about the Heraclians from the latter years of Heraclius onwards is to be found in texts created much later.[25] Even then, the totality of information is far from vast. But even with these caveats, it is notable that no contemporary source gives any family name for the Heraclians, or talks about them in distinctly dynastic terms.[26] Nor does any register that in either 695 or 711 a family that had held the throne for generations was overthrown. When Leontius (695–698) had Justinian mutilated rather than killed, he did so apparently for the sake of his affection for Justinian's father Constantine IV, but no previous Heraclian is mentioned.[27] The only evidence that anyone knew or cared about the end of the dynasty is distinctly circumstantial, namely that Justinian II's successors, shorn of his dynastic legitimacy, found it difficult to establish themselves.[28] Yet the little we know of the reign of Tiberius III Apsimar (698–705) suggests that his lack of dynastic legitimacy did little to stop him instituting a working regime. Indeed, when Justinian appeared before Constantinople with a Bulgar army the inhabitants 'dismissed him with foul insults'.[29] Apparently the citizens of the capital did not miss being ruled by a Heraclian, or at least not this Heraclian. That three emperors came and went in quick succession after 711 probably had little to do with their lack of dynastic legitimacy, and everything to do with the darkening war with the Arabs.

Arguments largely from silence are dangerous, and doubly so in a period with such limited sources. Therefore, for the remainder of this chapter we will turn to a topic with a much more secure evidence base, namely how the Heraclians presented their rule and the extent to which they did so in a dynastic fashion. In particular, we will examine three ways the Heraclians articulated their rule – the imperial college, imperial names, and the imperial image on coins and seals – and ask how important dynasty was in these three areas. The conclusion shall then compare all three and briefly place them in a wider setting, in order to identify and explain any patterns in the Heraclian emperors' use of dynasty.

The imperial college

Co-opting family members into the imperial college was the key means by which emperors could stake a long-term claim for their family on the imperial office.[30]

By appointing relatives as co-emperors rulers did not just declare an intended successor; they made them full emperors, whose reign began at that moment, not from that death of the original, senior emperor.[31] Therefore, they were associating their chosen heir(s) with imperial power, and reciprocally imperial power with that heir and the family as a whole. The imperial title could never be insignificant, even if real power was held by the senior emperor. An emperor was woven into the web of imperial ceremonial, their name included in prayers and dating formulas, their image broadcast on coins and seals.[32] Therefore, co-opting relatives, and especially sons, into an imperial college gave imperial ideology and its expression a distinctive and unambiguously dynastic element.

Byzantium's ability to have multiple emperors at the same time is so common from the seventh century onwards that Byzantinists can sometimes forget just how odd, comparatively speaking, a phenomenon this was.[33] Moreover, it would have felt relatively novel for a seventh-century audience. With the disintegration of the western empire, the norm once more became to have only one emperor. In the sixth century there were multiple emperors, that is full Augusti, on only four occasions, the first three of which – 527, 578 and 582 – were all appointed in the immediate expectation of a succession, for a grand total of around five months.[34] The fourth and most significant was Maurice crowning his seven-year-old son Theodosius as Augustus in 590, three years after being made Caesar.[35] This was the first significant period of co-rule since 402–408, the reason of course being that Theodosius was the first son born to a ruling emperor since the birth of Theodosius II, and had been named accordingly.[36] However, Maurice was clearly reticent about widely broadcasting the existence of an imperial college, with Theodosius not appearing on Maurice's coins or seals, and according to the *Chronicon Paschale* '[Theodosius' elevation] was not posted in the records, and none of the other actions of imperial recognition was performed in his case, except only the coronation.'[37] Nor are any of Maurice's five other sons recorded as being accorded any imperial title.[38] Therefore, when Heraclius seized the throne in 610 there was no strong tradition of multiple emperorship.

From the very outset, Heraclius' regime had a familial stamp. His rebellion had been launched in his and his father's (Heraclius the Elder) names.[39] While Heraclius sailed to Constantinople, his cousin Niketas seized Egypt for the family.[40] Niketas was also made Count of the Excubitors, the imperial bodyguard, and later his daughter was betrothed to Heraclius' eldest son.[41] Furthering the family takeover of the empire, Heraclius' brother Theodore was made *curopalates*, tasked with control of the palace.[42] Most strikingly, Heraclius crowned his nine-month-old son Heraclius Constantine as Augustus in 613.[43] Only Theodosius II had been crowned at a younger age. The year before, Heraclius, recently widowed, had crowned his one-year-old daughter Eudocia Epiphania as Augusta.[44] The reasons for this are not hard to find. Heraclius was a usurper, fighting a losing war against Persia. To secure his throne he needed a successor in place. Moreover, Heraclius needed family members, even if infants, in Constantinople, for in 613 he became the first emperor since Theodosius I to

take personal command of the army.[45] It was for similar reasons that Heraclius risked divine wrath and popular disapproval by marrying his niece Martina in either 613 or more plausibly 623.[46] Heraclius was about to commence his great counter-attacks against Persia, and the risks of leaving Constantinople had been demonstrated in 623 when the Avars almost captured him.[47] Given that Heraclius Constantine was also a sickly child, Heraclius needed more children.[48] In this Martina obliged in quantity, if not necessarily quality. Their first two sons, Flavius/Fabius and Theodosius were born disabled, and so ineligible for the throne.[49] Then in 626 Martina gave birth to a healthy son, Heraclonas, followed in 630 by David, and at some unspecified point later by Martinus.[50]

This newfound abundance of sons led Heraclius into a dramatic expansion of the imperial college. In 632 Heraclius Constantine assumed the consulship while Heraclonas was made Caesar, and if a misplaced notice in Theophanes refers to this incident he was raised to Caesar by his brother, a ceremonial statement of familial unity.[51] Then in 638 Heraclonas was raised to Augustus, while David was made Caesar in a ceremony preserved in the *De cerimoniis*:

> The *kamelaukion* [the cap of Caesars] which the Caesar [Heraclonas] was wearing was removed from his head and the imperial crown was placed on him. When another prayer was recorded for the ruler David, the emperor raised him to the rank of Caesar and placed the said *kamelaukion* on him.[52]

Afterwards all four emperors were acclaimed and proceeded to Hagia Sophia. That David was given the very same *kamelaukion* as Heraclonas personally placed on his head by Heraclius neatly reinforced the dynastic emphasis of the scene. Probably at the same time Martinus was created *nobilissimus*, for he was so acclaimed at another ceremony recorded in the *De cerimoniis* for 4th January 639, when Martina and Heraclius' daughters Augustina and Anastasia were also acclaimed Augustas.[53] Furthermore in 639 Heraclonas assumed the consulship and Martinus was made a Caesar.[54] Some of this could be explained as prudent succession planning given the known health issues of Heraclius Constantine, but taken together this represented something far more ambitious. Every living member of the family now held some imperial title. This was an almost unprecedented projection of imperial power through a dynastic lens. Interestingly, and probably not coincidentally, the last time there had been so many dynastic princelings had been under Constantine I.

The result would be as turbulent. In 641 five of the Heraclian clan would be an Augustus, namely Heraclius who died in January, Heraclius Constantine who died some three months later, Heraclonas, David and Constans II. The struggle between the two branches of the Heraclian family can be told by the permutations in the imperial college. Heraclius, presumably foreseeing trouble, left a will decreeing Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas equal emperors and that Martina should be honoured as mother and empress. However, it was quickly

clear that Heraclius Constantine had the seniority and greater support.[55] Judging from the dating formula on an Egyptian papyrus, it seems that the sickly Heraclius Constantine attempted to capitalise on his position of strength by elevating his son Constans to Caesar, ranked above David and Martinus, and possibly making his younger son Theodosius *nobilissimus*.[56] Heraclius Constantine then apparently wrote to the army and asked them to protect his children against the offspring of Martina.[57] He was right to worry, for another papyrus reveals that Heraclonas did remove Constans as Caesar, or at least his name from inclusion in documentary formula.[58] However, the Constantinopolitan mob forced Heraclonas to crown Constans as emperor with the very crown Heraclius had worn.[59] In a subsequent attempt to balance the scales, David was also made Augustus.[60] However, by the end of the year Heraclonas and David were overthrown, leaving the eleven-year-old Constans as sole emperor. That he survived must have been at least in part due to his unimpeachable pedigree and to continued loyalty to the house of Heraclius.[61]

The subsequent temporary abeyance of multiple emperorship was most probably simply a product of a lack of sons. Then in 654 Constans II crowned his eldest son Constantine IV, aged around two.[62] The timing is significant, for Constans and his brother were about to take personal command of the fleet against the Arabs.[63] A Heraclian was needed in Constantinople, even if he was a child. Constans had a clear precedent for this, as Heraclius had crowned his son immediately before taking command of the army. What is more surprising, given the troubles that had occasioned his own rise to power, is that in 659 Constans further imitated Heraclius by crowning his other two sons, Heraclius and Tiberius. Indeed, Constans went further by making each son an Augustus, creating an entirely unprecedented four Augusti.[64] Such a policy was far more than was needed to secure the succession. Constans, like Heraclius before him, had given the imperial college a distinctly dynastic stamp. Constans II's success in including his younger sons within the imperial college can be judged by the fact that it was not until 681 that Constantine could remove his brothers from it. Even then there was a significant protest from the Anatolikon troops who according to Theophanes associated three emperors with the Trinity, a sign of just how embedded multiple emperorship had become.[65]

By 681 the dynasty had ruled for seventy-one years, and for all bar sixteen there had been anywhere between two and four Heraclians as Augusti. Constantine, his father and grandfather had all been crowned while minors. Yet Constantine IV chose not to crown his son Justinian II, despite his being fifteen at the time. The only evidence that he did is a line in Theophanes stating that from 681 Constantine 'ruled alone with his son Justinian', which is delightfully self-contradictory.[66] More importantly, Justinian does not appear on Constantine's coins or seals, and Justinian's reign is counted on the few extant documents as beginning in 685, not 681.[67] Single emperorship continued under Justinian II for the obvious reason that he had no son, until the birth of Tiberius around the beginning of his second reign in 705, after which Justinian reverted to Heraclian precedent and rushed to

crown him. Whether Justinian would have done so if he had not had to retake the throne is an unknowable, but certainly it makes Constantine's decision to reign alone stand out all the more.

Therefore, on our first criterion of multiple emperorship we can say that Heraclius went well beyond established models in associating his children with imperial power, thereby establishing a precedent that Constans II closely followed and even extended. The imperial college was merged with dynasty to an extent almost without parallel. Constantine IV chose to break with this model, and Justinian II's re-embrace was limited by a paucity of heirs and probably forced by events.

Imperial names

Names are one of the simplest means for any family to advertise internal links, and emperors had long used them to associate themselves or their children with their predecessors. For instance, when Maurice was adopted by Tiberius II and crowned emperor he added his adopted father's name to his own.[68] When Maurice fathered the first son born to a ruling emperor in nearly two centuries, the circus factions lobbied for different names, with the Blues wanting 'Justinian' because of his longevity, the ultimately successful Greens 'Theodosius' recalling the last son born to an emperor.[69] Looking at the Heraclians, there are some obvious patterns. Firstly, and particularly in the early stages, they lived up to the name of the dynasty. Heraclius was the son of Heraclius, named his first son Heraclius, named his first healthy son by Martina Heraclius, the actual name of Heraclonas, and his eldest grandson was also called Heraclius, the birth-name of Constans II.[70] Clearly there was a tradition of naming eldest sons Heraclius. Even when Constans II and Constantine IV used other names for their firstborn, they still used the family name for their second sons.[71] Other children probably were named after ancestors as well. For instance, Heraclius' eldest daughter was named Eudocia Epiphania, after both her mother and grandmother, while Martinus probably honoured Martina. The only real oddity amongst Heraclius' children, and indeed the entire clan, is David, whose name surely reflects the fact that he was born in 630, the year when Heraclius triumphantly returned the Cross to Jerusalem, his name therefore being part of the celebration of the empire's miraculous revival.[72]

Furthermore, from the outset of the dynasty a lexicon of approved imperial names was employed to endow the dynasty with an aura of legitimacy, with the recycling of Constantine, Theodosius, Tiberius and Justinian.[73] These could either be given as birth-names, or could be adopted on becoming emperor. For instance, in 641 David took the name Tiberius.[74] This policy also ran to several imperial women, with Heraclius' first wife Fabia changing her name on becoming Augusta to the more auspicious Eudocia, the same name adopted by her daughter Epiphania on her own elevation. Martina is also recorded as Anastasia in the *De cerimoniis*, a name shared by one of her daughters and also the wife of

Constantine IV.[75] Constans II was married to a Fausta, which just so happened to be the name of Constantine I's wife.[76] Perhaps the most blatant renaming of an empress was Justinian II's rechristening of his Khazar wife as Theodora.[77]

As many have noted, within this melange of the imperial past, Constantine clearly stands out.[78] Indeed it is hard to think of a less subtle way to proclaim one's family legitimate emperors than naming your first child Heraclius New Constantine! Nor was this the only Constantinian allusion. Tiberius was also associated since Tiberius II on becoming Caesar in 574 had taken the name Constantine.[79] Furthermore, as time progressed the dynasty became more that of Constantine than Heraclius. After 632 Heraclius Constantine is referred to solely as Constantine on dating formula, coins and most literary sources.[80] His son Heraclius, aka Constans II, on his accession was acclaimed Constantine by the crowd, and then named his first son Constantine. Even Heraclonas on his coins was referred to as Constantine.[81] Constantine was almost becoming another imperial title.[82]

This makes Constantine IV's decision to name his eldest son Justinian all the more surprising. Not only was Justinian not in the family tradition, the only time it had been used since Justinian I was by Maurice for his sixth son, hardly a ringing endorsement for its popularity.[83] Furthermore, the context of this naming is significant. Justinian was born sometime between September 668 and September 669.[84] Constans II was assassinated either on 15th July 668 or 669.[85] So at minimum Constantine deliberately eschewed established dynastic practice, which in itself was a notable break. Moreover, this might well have been one of his first moves as ruling emperor, taken at a moment of high dynastic and imperial uncertainty.[86] At such a moment to break with tradition and choose the name Justinian was surely significant, an articulation that the new emperor was not going to blindly follow the policies and propaganda of his dead, and little mourned, father. Of course, this does not mean that Constantine broke with everything that had come before, even in naming practice, for he named his second son Heraclius, someone only known through a notice in the *Liber Pontificalis* that locks of his and Justinian's hair were sent by Constantine to the pope.[87] But the hold of the name Constantine on the family was broken. As such it is interesting to note that when Justinian II regained the throne in 705 and crowned his son one might have expected him to have named him either Constantine or Heraclius, thereby advertising his lineage. Instead he chose Tiberius, true a name already part of the Heraclian tradition but one of distinctly secondary importance. Whatever his reasons, in 705 Justinian chose not to emphasise his descent from Heraclius.

The imperial image

What then about the wider imperial image? The most important medium available was imperial coinage; indeed inclusion on the solidus was probably the best way of proclaiming to the wider world that someone was emperor.[88] Heraclius' first issues largely followed established precedent, with his image

similar to that of Phocas, a facing bust in military clothing.[89] The major difference is on the reverse, where there is a return to a cross-on-steps first introduced by Tiberius II. The real innovation comes in 613.[90] Here we see Heraclius and a diminutive Heraclius Constantine, dressed in identical civilian garb. Before this point multiple emperors on Constantinopolitan solidi are exceedingly rare – outside the capital and on smaller-value coins there was more variation – and mostly found during moments of succession. Heraclius' most immediate role-model, Maurice, is *not* depicted with his son on his solidi after he made him Augustus. Evidently, Heraclius wanted to advertise as widely as possible who his co-emperor and designated successor was.

Heraclius' physical appearance was also tweaked, adopting civilian rather than military dress and a new hairstyle, with prominent wavy curls. There is a largely irresolvable debate on how far images on coins reflect reality, but it is agreed that on most Heraclian coins there is some degree of portraiture, with for instance child emperors starting small and then growing in size.[91] The most stunning example for Heraclius are his coins from 629 onwards that depict him sporting a gigantic beard and moustache, plausibly acquired on campaign.[92] So perhaps Heraclius actually looked like this. What is certain is that Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, who was first added to the coinage in 632 wearing the *kamelaukion* and then from 638 appears with a crown, were both presented with this hairstyle, and it became a standard feature of the dynasty's image. More importantly, the inclusion of Heraclonas meant that three emperors were depicted together on solidi for the first time. This was a dynastic image broadcast, *mutatis mutandis*, on the folles and on Heraclius' most famous numismatic innovation, the silver hexagram.[93]

Turning to the coins of Constans II we find that they follow the iconography of Heraclius exceedingly closely.[94] As Constans elevated his children they are proclaimed by being added to the coinage, with their ages represented by their size. All those depicted have the same hairstyle, hold *globus cruigers* and wear imperial regalia. Most strikingly, essentially as soon as he was old enough Constans is portrayed with a beard exactly like his grandfather's, a beard that won him the nickname *pogontaus*, 'the bearded'.[95] Constans' only real innovation on his solidi is that since he promoted three rather than two sons as Augustus, there was insufficient room for all on one side. Therefore in 659–663 Heraclius and Tiberius are relegated to the reverse flanking the Cross, while from 663 all three sons occupy the reverse, in a type virtually identical to the last issues of Heraclius.[96] This last necessitated the removal of the Cross, a striking indication of the supremacy of dynasty in imperial presentation, taking precedence even over the premier symbol of Christianity. On his folles Constans underscored his association with Heraclius by adopting the same iconography of a standing figure in military garb holding a cross-sceptre, but also highlighted his link with Constantine I by adding the inscription *en toutō Nika!*, 'By this sign conquer!', the message that Constantine famously beheld before defeating Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge.[97]

Once again Constantine IV broke with this established tradition. While the reverse of his solidi continued depicting his brothers just as Constans II's had, on the obverse they returned to a three-quarter rather than full-face imperial bust, helmeted and holding a spear, a type last used during Justinian I's early reign.[98] Moreover, as Constantine's reign progressed his figure gets closer to the sixth-century archetype, while that characteristic 'Heraclian' hairstyle recedes and the gigantic beard is never grown. Constantine also attempted to overhaul the copper coinage, issuing folles using the new/old style that did not just return to the weight standard of 600, before the fiscal crunch had led to the production of debased and rather shoddy coins, but to a heavy standard introduced by Justinian I.[99] Then in 681 Constantine's brothers were removed from the coinage, and Justinian II was not added.[100] Once again, rather than emphasising his seventh-century ancestor, or even advertising his successor, Constantine IV preferred to associate himself with his sixth-century predecessor.

On the numismatic front, Justinian II was both more traditional and radical than his father. His first solidi return to the type of Constans, and once he had a son he was added to the coinage, in a miniaturised version.[101] More famously and radically, Justinian broke all established models by employing a bust of Christ on the obverse, relegating his own image to the reverse.[102] Evidently, Justinian II did not feel beholden to precedent, or see any need to associate himself with his forebears on his coins.

An almost identical story can be told from imperial seals, which normally had a Virgin and child on the obverse, and the imperial image usually identical to the solidus on the reverse. Once more we can see Heraclius deliberately associating himself with his children, and crafting an imperial image that was almost slavishly followed by Constans II's seals.[103] Constantine IV's seals were in the beginning more conservative than his coins, maintaining the established form.[104] However, from 681 Constantine went into overdrive, not only bringing in his new/old imperial image, but perhaps on one variant employing the Virgin Hodegetria for the first time on imperial seals, while more radically and commonly in other types Constantine himself took the obverse, and a cross potent was employed on the reverse.[105] This was a radical recasting, the precise ideological import of which is beyond our scope here, but what we should note is that once again Constantine IV was fully willing and able to discard established Heraclian precedent, and showed scant desire to promote dynasty in his imperial image. Justinian II would return the Virgin to the obverse of his seals, while the reverse followed the pattern of his solidi.[106]

Of course, discussion of the imperial image on coins and seals raises the old and largely unanswerable question of who actually crafted that image: the emperor and/or his advisors, or the die-cutters of the mint?[107] Perhaps all the above was the product of anonymous and largely autonomous artists, working according to functional or aesthetic pressures rather than reflecting political messages dictated by emperors. Certainly, one should be suspicious

of explaining all changes, even the most minor, through politics. However, I maintain that the changes examined above are best explained as reflecting political messages for two reasons. Firstly, convention was decisively broken in both media three times over the course of the dynasty: when Heraclius included multiple imperial portraits, when Constantine IV returned to a singular emperor with a distinctly different style, and when Justinian II introduced Christ onto his solidi. All three were major changes rather than minor modifications in style, and there was no change in the economic function of the solidus during the period that might have warranted such alterations. The only plausible explanation is that the emperors or their advisors were actively involved in crafting these important shifts in the imperial image. Secondly, these changes were all contemporaneous with important political matters and overlapped with the other two themes discussed above.

Before we turn to the conclusion, let us consider the few other remaining imperial images to survive from the period. Outside coins and seals, the only other extant material depiction of the Heraclians is the panel of privileges in San Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna.[108] This famous mosaic has been the centre of much controversy that is hard to settle given centuries of modifications to the artefact. Indeed, whether it displays Constans II and his children or Constantine IV and his brothers remains an open question. Either way, it conveyed the familial imperial college that was suitable to either the reign of Constans or the early years of Constantine. Yet, if we follow Cosentino in identifying the imperial figure as Constantine IV there are some potentially interesting inferences that can be drawn. First, there is a clear visual distinction between Constantine and his brothers, making it clear who was the senior emperor. Second, Constantine is beardless and strikingly different from how Constans II was portrayed on coins and seals. Indeed, the figure Constantine most looks like is Justinian I in the mosaic panel at San Vitale, with the two compositions markedly similar. Whether that reflects the desires of Constantine, archbishop Reparatus who commissioned the mosaic, the preferences of the mosaicists, or the survival of a Justinianic composition that was then adapted is unknowable, but it certainly chimes with the decision to revert to Justinianic iconography and to name his son Justinian.

Finally, the eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomai Chronikai* offers a few characteristically enigmatic notes on statues of the Heraclians. Only two are recorded, both of Justinian II. One was in the hippodrome and recorded the deeds of the 'godless' emperor in his notorious second reign.[109] The other was set behind the Milion and depicted Justinian kneeling, presumably before Christ, and next to his wife.[110] This was clearly an important space as the Bulgar Khan Tervel, who had aided in Justinian's restoration and had been awarded with the title of Caesar, was awarded with tribute there. This statue was set up next to the 'measure of Heraclius', itself rather mysterious. Perhaps such positioning was designed to invoke memories of descent, but given the paucity of evidence it is impossible to say.

Conclusions

As is fairly self-evident, our three themes are positively correlated. Furthermore, most developments can be tied relatively closely to a contemporary significant event. To aid identification of these patterns a timeline is appended below. As this makes clear, Heraclius went to great lengths to establish his family on the throne and to cultivate a dynastic, 'Heraclian' image in the presentation of his regime. This policy was continued and even deepened by Constans II. In contrast, Constantine IV not only sharply broke from the established model, but did not promote dynasty in any measurable way. In some ways, Justinian II went back to the model, especially in his second reign. More often, however, he built on his father's precedents, while on occasion also being strikingly novel. Therefore, to return to our original question of the extent to which dynasty mattered, the Heraclians fall into two distinct periods. For the first three generations dynasty was a prominent and consistent component of imperial presentation, whose significance seems to have intensified. With Constantine IV and especially after 681, dynasty was either absent or distinctly marginal in the portrayal of the imperial office. This shift potentially had its impact on contemporary perceptions, for while there are instances that can be interpreted as demonstrations of attachment to the dynasty, rather than to an individual emperor, before 681 – such as the crowd demanding Constans be crowned with Heraclius' crown and renamed Constantine or the support for Constantine IV's brothers – none can be found after.

This fault-line can be found in other aspects of imperial ideology not considered so far. Over the course of his reign, Heraclius particularly invoked David and Constantine as his legitimating role models.[111] Constans II sustained the Old Testament theme, for instance being compared to the priest-king Melchizidek, and the connection to Constantine, for example by inscribing *en toutō Nika!* on his coins.[112] Constantine IV changed the primary referents to Justinian and Christ. At the Sixth Ecumenical Council, called to repudiate the Christological doctrine favoured by Heraclius and Constans II, Constantine's proclaimed co-ruler was not his brothers but Christ himself.[113] Indeed, this message of co-rulership with Christ might have its inverse echo in the Anatolikon troops calling for a trinity of rulers in support of Constantine's brothers. Moreover, while Constantine IV is compared with multiple emperors in the *Acta*, Justinian, the last emperor to convene an ecumenical council, is the most frequent comparator.[114] Justinian II continued Constantine IV's echoing of Justinian I and Christ by convening the Council in Trullo, the express purpose of which was to supplement the work of the fifth and sixth councils.[115] Trullo posited Justinian II as the successor to his father and to his namesake, providing a canon law-code to complement Justinian I's civil law. Trullo also reinforced the message of Justinian II's coins that he was the mirror of Christ, his vicegerent on earth.

These alterations taken together with the shifting significance of dynasty suggest that the Heraclian family articulated two markedly different imperial paradigms.

Date	*Occurrences in the Heraclian family*	*Major changes in coins and seals*	*Associated events (?)*
610	Heraclius becomes Augustus, marries Fabia, who crowned Augusta taking the name Eudocia		
611	Birth of Epiphania		
612	Birth of Heraclius (New) Constantine; death of (Fabia) Eudocia; Epiphania crowned Augusta taking the name Eudocia		
613	Heraclius Constantine crowned Augustus; possible marriage to Martina, who crowned Augusta	Heraclius Constantine's diminutive portrait added to coinage	Heraclius takes personal command of the army
623	Possible marriage to Martina; undated births of disabled Fabius/Flavius and Theodosius		Heraclius almost captured by Avars
624			Heraclius launches first counter-offensive
626	Birth of Heraclius [Heraclonas]		
628			Victory against the Persians
629		Heraclius depicted with long beard; on follis Heraclius shown in military gear holding cross-sceptre	
630	Birth of David to Heraclius and Martina; birth of Heraclius [Constans II] to Heraclius Constantine		Triumphal return of the Cross to Jerusalem
632	Heraclius Constantine assumes the Consulship, thereafter styled as Constantine, and crowns Heraclonas as Caesar	Heraclonas appears on the solidus as a diminutive figure wearing the *kamelaukion*	
638	Heraclonas crowned as Augustus, David as Caesar, Martinus made *nobilissimus*	Heraclonas appears on solidus with crown	

(continued)

(continued)

Date	*Occurrences in the Heraclian family*	*Major changes in coins and seals*	*Associated events (?)*
639	Heraclonas assumes consulship, Martinus made Caesar, Heraclius' daughters Augustina and Anastasia made Augustas		
641	Death of Heraclius; (Heraclius) Constantine dies three months later; Heraclonas crowns Heraclius [Constans II] as Augustus, who renamed Constantine, and David, who renamed Tiberius; Heraclonas, Martina, (David) Tiberius and Martinus overthrown	Heraclius Constantine, Heraclonas and Constans II all called Constantine on their coins; Constantine's folles have the inscription *en toutō nika!*	
651		Constans II sports long beard after fashion of Heraclius on all his coins and generally follows his iconography	
654	Constans II crowns son Constantine IV as Augustus	Constans II and Constantine IV appear on solidus in same type as Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine	Constans II and his brother Theodosius lead fleet
659	Constans II executes his brother Theodosius; crowns sons Heraclius and Tiberius as Augusti	Heraclius and Tiberius added to the reverse of the solidus	
663		Constans II on obverse of solidi, with three sons standing on reverse	Constans II bases himself in Sicily
668/9	Constans II assassinated; Birth of Justinian II	Constantine IV depicted in military garb, looking to the right and holding a spear in a type last seen in the early reign of Justinian I, while Heraclius and Tiberius continue on the reverse; follis temporarily returned to heavy standard introduced by Justinian I	

681	Heraclius and Tiberius deposed	Constantine IV appears alone on coins and seals, and on the latter replaces the Virgin with a cross	Sixth Ecumenical Council
684	Constantine IV sends locks of his sons', Justinian and Heraclius, hair to the pope		
685	Constantine IV dies, and Justinian II becomes Augustus	Justinian II reverts to traditional bust	
690		Justinian II places Christ on obverse of solidus	
692			The Council in Trullo
695	Justinian II deposed		
705	Justinian II returns to power, summons wife Theodora to Constantinople, along with their son Tiberius who crowned Augustus	Different bust of Christ placed on obverse, and Justinian II and Tiberius appear on the reverse	
711	Justinian II and Tiberius overthrown		

The first, founded in the war against Persia, presented the emperor as a pious, active, warrior king channelling the memory of David and Constantine. The dangers of a soldier emperor necessitated some form of dynastic imperial college, but this was then elevated into a central feature of Heraclian rule. This package was decisively abandoned by the regime of Constantine IV. The reasons for this change were probably many – for instance the unpopularity of Constans II, the failure to reconquer the lands lost to the Arabs, the potential for friction between collateral members of the family when the imperial office was so relatively open – and are not our present concern. Rather, all we need to note is the formulation of a new paradigm, with the invocation of a more recent imperial past and a preference for the New Testament over the Old. Conceivably this more Christocentric monarchy had a direct impact on the prevalence of dynasty. Perhaps Constantine IV and his advisers did not want to dilute the message of co-rulership with Christ by including Justinian II in the imperial college. Or perhaps Constantine was determined to return to the singular rule of the sixth century, or even to further emulate Justinian I. After all, the last time that Christ was so prominent a figure in imperial ideology was during the latter years of Justinian's reign.[116]

Were the Heraclians then the 'first Byzantine dynasty in a real sense'? For Ostrogorsky, the Heraclians not only reigned during a pivotal period but were instrumental in the transformation of Rome into Byzantium.[117] That transformation included the recasting of the imperial office. In particular, Ostrogorsky highlighted Constantine IV's decision to depose his brothers as the key moment when hereditary monarchy was assured by limiting succession to the eldest son and, more significantly for Ostrogorsky, the supreme position of the *autokrator* above his co-emperors was secured within the imperial college.[118] Dagron agreed in part, emphasising the moment as the watershed between the horizontal, patrimonial family and what he regarded as the dynasty proper, a family vertically organised around primogeniture.[119] For Dagron though, it was the Isaurians, with their infant coronations but restriction of the imperial college to the eldest son, the creation of the title *porphyrogennetos* and their retention of deceased ancestors on their coins, who really should be counted as the first Byzantine dynasty. Dagron is surely right that dynasty reached unprecedented prominence under the Isaurians, and is also right to caution that multiple modes of succession and legitimacy remained open to later emperors despite the prominence of dynasty. Indeed, the imperial office never fitted into any neat constitutional model, nor was it ever wholly encapsulated by one ideological paradigm.

Yet, if we employ a definition of dynasty looser than Dagron's but tighter than *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*'s, namely of an imperial family who strongly portrayed their rule through a familial lens and sought legitimacy from it, a different answer presents itself. For then, from 610 to 681 Heraclian rule could certainly be defined as dynastic. Indeed, dynasty took on an unprecedented significance, and the first Heraclians provided one model of imperial presentation for later generations to follow.[120] After 681 this paradigm was rejected. *Pace* Dagron, Constantine IV's deposition of his brothers was not

a stepping stone to dynasty proper; it was the repudiation of dynasty. And *pace* Ostrogorsky, it should not be seen as a vital moment in the evolution of Byzantine monarchy. Rather, Constantine IV's reign was in part a return to the norms of the sixth century and proved something of a dead end. The weaknesses of singular rule were made amply apparent in the remarkably swift and easy usurpation of 695. Justinian II learnt the lesson, and more lastingly so did the Isaurians. After the eighth century, if an emperor had any sons at least one was elevated to co-rule. Such a policy did not guarantee security, but failure to have a familial co-ruler did virtually guarantee insecurity. On the other hand, the grander aspect of Constantine IV and Justinian II's imperial ideology, the strident mimesis of Christ, would after an abeyance under the Old Testament-minded Isaurians become a standard feature of imperial ideology.

The Heraclians were, therefore, not the first Byzantine dynasty in any meaningful sense of the word. If one employs the strict definition of Dagron that honour belongs to the Isaurians. If one means nothing other than family the discussion becomes one of periodisation, and there are other answers just as sound as to when Byzantium starts as the seventh century. And if one uses the definition proposed above then the Heraclians do not form a collective, but rather two periods, the latter of which saw dynasty banished to the margins of imperial ideology. However, the first three generations of the Heraclian family did employ a dynastic ideology so consistently and prominently that they created a new model of imperial rule. Moreover, that model had an afterlife, but only as one of many historical exemplars, its themes and ideas drawing upon and then becoming part of the rich, fluid and evolving discourse of imperial ideology, there for future emperors to reuse and reshape as they saw fit. It was this very multiplicity of ideas and pasts that allowed the Heraclians to construct different imperial paradigms to suit changing circumstances, and their example further enriched the heritage. Therefore, rather than being its first dynasty, the Heraclians reveal the limits as much as the potential of dynasty in seventh-century Byzantium.

Notes

1 Shepard (ed.) 2008: 906.
2 For the topic of dynasty in Byzantium see Dagron 2003: 13–53. For Byzantine political thought and ideology that framed the imperial office see also: Dvornik 1966; Runciman 1977; Nicol 1988; and Kaldellis 2015.
3 Dagron 2003: 21.
4 Nicol 1988: 63.
5 For instance, Dagron 2003: 13–14, notes that a seventh/eighth-century Chinese traveller and a ninth-century Khazar envoy both mentioned the rapid turnover of emperors and dynasties so at odds with their own societies.
6 Dagron 2003: 22–32.
7 *PLRE* 2, Aelia Pulcheria. For the influence of Pulcheria and other female members of the Theodosian family, see Holum 1982.
8 Michael Psellos, *Chronographia* 5.17–51.

9 For imperial women in general, see Garland 1999; Herrin 2001.
10 Dagron 2003: 32.
11 Herrin 2001: 65.
12 *De cer.* 1.42, 2.21–22.
13 McEvoy 2013.
14 Dagron 2003: 26–28.
15 Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 6268.
16 Nicol 1988: 63.
17 McCormick 1991. In the period 610–1204, 32 co-emperors succeeded of whom 25 were offspring. 21 took power violently. The Palaiologans shift the statistics firmly in the direction of family.
18 For the period in general see Stratos 1968–80; Haldon 1997; Howard-Johnston 2010; and Sarris 2011: 226–306. For a discussion of many of the same themes surrounding dynasty, ideology and uses of the imperial past in the seventh century, see Haldon 1994.
19 Indeed, seventh-century Byzantium is almost coterminous with the Heraclians. For instance, Stratos 1968–80 explicitly ends with the death of the last Heraclians.
20 Ostrogorsky 1968: 144. A sentiment echoed in Haldon 1997: 78.
21 Namely Heraclius; his sons Heraclius Constantine, Heraclonas and David; his grandson Constans II; his great-grandson Constantine IV and his brothers Heraclius and Tiberius; and finally Justinian II and his son Tiberius.
22 In general see Kaegi 2003; Reinink and Stolte (eds.) 2002.
23 For the dating of Constans II's assassination to 669 and its general significance see Howard-Johnston 2010: 126, 235–236, 491. For a defence of the 668 date, see Jankowiak 2013: 307–309.
24 For the challenges faced by Heraclius in the early years of his reign and his prominent use of his children see Kaegi 2003: 58–99.
25 Treadgold 2013: 1–37.
26 By far the most common occasion for multiple generations of the Heraclian family to be mentioned at the same moment is during a succession, and then usually an emperor is referred to simply as the son of his predecessor, with no further elaboration given. The only regular mention of any additional antecessor is when Constans II became emperor in 641, when several sources explicitly state that Constans was the grandson of Heraclius and the son of Heraclius Constantine; see *inter alia* Theophanes, AM 6133. The complex sequence of emperors in 641, and the tangled family politics, would be enough to warrant such clarification, though it also seems highly plausible that from the inception of his reign Constans II was presented as the legitimate descendent of Heraclius, unlike Heraclonas who was born of the incestuous marriage to Martina.
27 Nicephorus, *History* 40.
28 Treadgold 1997: 337–345.
29 Nicephorus, *History* 42, 103.
30 Nicol 1988: 63.
31 Zuckermann 2010: 889.
32 For the huge importance of ceremonial to Byzantine emperors, in which all those associated with imperial power would have been included, see Dagron 2003: 54–124.
33 A point I owe to Simon Corcoran.
34 Respectively Justin I and Justinian I, Justin II and Tiberius II, and Tiberius II and Maurice. Tiberius II was also Caesar to the insane Justin II 574–78.
35 *PLRE* 3, Theodosius 13.
36 John of Ephesus, *History* 3.5.14
37 *Chronicon Paschale* 590; trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989: 140.

38 *PLRE* 3, Tiberius 3, Petrus 49, Paulus 49, Iustinus 13, and Iustinianus 4.
39 Kaegi 2003: 40–41.
40 Kaegi 2003: 53.
41 *PLRE* 3, Nicetas 7; *PLRE* 3, Gregoria.
42 *PLRE* 3, Theodrous 163; Kaegi 2003: 71.
43 *PLRE* 3, Heraclius Constantinus 38
44 *PLRE* 3, Epiphania *quae et* Eudocia 2
45 Kaegi 2003: 68–69.
46 *PLRE* 3, Martina 1. For the marriage to Martina being probably in 623, and the dating errors in Theophanes, see Howard-Johnston 2010: 252–253, 281–282.
47 Nicephorus, *History* 10. For Heraclius' campaigns from 624 see Howard-Johnston 1999.
48 For the poor health of Heraclius Constantine see Kaegi 2003: 238.
49 *PLRE* 3, Fabius, Theodosius 44; Nicephorus, *History* 11; see also the commentary of Mango 1990: 179–180, for his preference for Fabius. Although ineligible for the throne, Heraclius still made use of Theodosius by marrying him to the daughter of the Persian general Shahrvaraz as part of the bargain by which the Persian army evacuated Egypt and Heraclius supported Shahrvaraz's bid for the Persian throne. This was not the only arranged marriage alliance, as Epiphania was betrothed to the Turkish Khan. For Heraclius' use of his children for marriage alliances, see Kaegi 2003: 188–191.
50 *PLRE* 3, Heraclonas, David 8, Marinus 12. *Pace* the *PLRE* I prefer Martinus to Marinus given that it is the name used in both Nicephorus and the *De cerimoniis*.
51 Theophanes AM 6108. We can be certain of the date thanks to a dating formula in a papal letter from 634, see Jaffé *et al.* (eds.) 1885–88: 2018.
52 *De cer.* 2.27; trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012, vol. 2: 628.
53 *De cer.* 2.29. *PLRE* 3, Augustina, Martina 2.
54 Nicephorus, *History* 27. While this has been doubted by some, Zuckermann 2010: 875, demonstrates through a formula preserved in an Egyptian papyrus that Martinus was definitely made a Caesar in 639.
55 Nicephorus, *History* 27–28.
56 *PmbZ* 1: 7797; Zuckermann 2010: 870. Zuckermann believes that the anonymous *nobilissimus* named in the formula was the similarly unnamed son of Heraclius who in John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120, was castrated during the downfall of Martina and Heraclonas. While possible, this youth is nowhere else mentioned, and could anyway refer to Martinus. Moreover, if this was another son of Heraclius, why does no *nobilissimus* appear in the imperial college of Heraclonas? Lastly, it seems that Theodosius, who is only mentioned in the sources joining his brother at the battle of Phoenix in 654 and being killed by him in 659/660, must have had some imperial title at some point to warrant Constans' fear of him being sufficient to court public disapproval by having him killed.
57 Nicephorus, *History* 27.
58 Zuckermann 2010: 875.
59 Nicephorus, *History* 31.
60 Nicephorus, *History* 32.
61 According to Theophanes AM 6134, on his accession as sole emperor Constans addressed the senate stressing his descent from the long-ruling Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine, while denigrating Martina and her incestuous offspring.
62 *PmbZ* 1: 3702. We know the date thanks to the regnal years recorded for Constantine IV, Heraclius and Tiberius in the *Acta* of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, Riedinger (ed.) 1990–95.
63 Hoyland 2011: 143–144.

64 *PmbZ* 1: 2556, 8484.
65 Theophanes AM 6161. In the Syriac sources the opposition on the grounds that the Trinity in heaven should be reflected by a Trinity on earth is voiced by a lone senator, see Hoyland 2011: 173–174. For the deposition of Constantine IV's brothers see Haldon 1997: 68–69.
66 Theophanes, AM 6173, trans. Mango and Scott 1997: 502. Other sources declare Constantine ruled alone.
67 For instance, Justinian's name does not appear in Constantine IV's edict enforcing the Sixth Ecumenical Council, Riedinger (ed.) 1990–95: 832–857, and Justinian's reign is counted from 685 in a letter he sent to the pope declaring his support for that council, Riedinger (ed.) 1990–95: 886–887.
68 *PLRE* 3, Mauricius 4.
69 Dagron 2003: 27.
70 For Heraclius the Elder, Heraclius' father, see *PLRE* 3, Heraclius 3.
71 Respectively *PmbZ* 1: 2556, 2557.
72 For this brief moment of celebration see Kaegi 2003: 192–228.
73 For the significance of names, or more precisely the limited significance of imperial names, see Haldon 1994: 104–106.
74 Nicephorus, *History* 32.
75 *De cer.* 2.29; for Constantine IV's wife see *PmbZ* 1: 228.
76 *PmbZ* 1: 6119.
77 *PmbZ* 1: 7282.
78 For the importance of Constantine I for later Byzantine emperors see Magdalino (ed.) 1994.
79 *PLRE* 3, Tiberius 1.
80 For instance, in Jaffé *et al.* (eds.) 1885–88: 2018, from 634 he is only called Constantine, whereas in 2001, from 613, and 2016, from 628, he is called Heraclius Constantine. For the coins see *DOC* 2.2: 385–388.
81 *DOC* 2.2: 389–401.
82 Haldon 1994: 104.
83 *PLRE* 3, Iustinianus 4.
84 *PmbZ* 1: 3556.
85 See n. 23.
86 For the context see Howard-Johnston 2010: 488–495.
87 *Liber Pontificalis* 83.3.
88 On the iconography of Heraclian coinage, and on imperial iconography on coinage in general, see also the remarks of Mark Redknap in this volume.
89 *DOC* 2.1, Heraclius solidus I; follis I.
90 *DOC* 2.1, Heraclius solidus II; follis II.
91 *DOC* 2.1 : 88–94.
92 *DOC* 2.1, Heraclius solidus III–IV; follis V–VI.
93 *DOC* 2.1 : 115–116.
94 In particular compare *DOC* 2.2, Constans solidus IV with *DOC* 2.1, Heraclius solidus III.
95 *DOC* 2.2, Constans II solidus III–VII; follis V–XI.
96 *DOC* 2.2, Constans II solidus V–VII; the reverse of VII cf. the obverse of *DOC* 2.1, Heraclius solidus IV.
97 *DOC* 2.2, Constans II follis, I–VII.
98 *DOC* 2.2, Constantine IV solidus II–III. This and other examples in Roman/Byzantine numismatic history demonstrate that either some kind of archive of coin types must have been kept in the Constantinopolitan mint, or that old coins continued in circulation long enough that older iconographies could be resurrected. For the link between Constantine IV's return to a Justinianic iconography and his naming of his son Justinian, see Morrisson 1970: 374.

99 *DOC* 2.2, Constantine IV follis I–IV. For the potential financial context and significance of this reform see Brandes 2002: 323–329; Jankowiak 2013: 314–315.
100 *DOC* 2.2, Constantine IV solidus IV.
101 *DOC* 2.2, Justinian II (first reign) solidus I–II, (second reign) solidus II.
102 For the significance of Justinian II's coins, see Breckenridge 1959. For a dating of the Christ coinage to 690, see Humphreys 2013: 229–244.
103 *DOS* VI: 12–21.
104 *DOS* VI: 22.
105 *DOS* VI: 23–24.
106 *DOS* VI: 25–26.
107 For a discussion of this question and the potential impact coins could make on their audience, see Morrisson 2013.
108 Cosentino 2014.
109 *Parastaseis* 61.
110 *Parastaseis* 37; commentary in Cameron and Herrin 1984: 210–212.
111 For David in particular, see Spain Alexander 1977. For the rise in the general importance of the Old Testament in late antique imperial rhetoric peaking under Heraclius, see Rapp 2010.
112 For the Melchizidek comparison, see Dagron 2003: 170–173.
113 Riedinger (ed.) 1990–95: 818.2.
114 Justinian was mentioned 24 times at the council. In comparison, Constantine was mentioned only thrice. Constantine IV was hailed as a new Marcian and a new Justinian on four occasions (Riedinger (ed.) 1990–95: 210.15–19; 702.9–12; 750.3–5; 798.10–11), at the first two of which he was also hailed as a new Theodosius, and only at the first as a new Constantine. Not only was the memory of Constantine I a marginal presence at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, it was a memory that grew fainter over the course of its sessions.
115 *The Council in Trullo*, ed. Ohme 2006. For this council and its ideological importance, including Justinian II's positioning of himself vis-à-vis Constantine IV and Justinian I, see Humphreys 2015: 37–80.
116 Meier 2003: 608–638.
117 Ostrogorsky 1968: 87–146.
118 Ostrogorsky 1968: 128–129. Ostrogorsky was engaged in a debate over what title really signified who had power within the imperial college, and strongly argued for the importance of *autokrator*, the Greek equivalent of *imperator*. For this debate and a cogent criticism of this search for a monarchical concept behind the various titles given to members of the imperial college, see Zuckermann 2010: 885–890.
119 Dagron 2003: 31–35.
120 Literally so in the case of the ceremonies of 638–639 preserved in *De cer.* 2.27–29. The similarities with Basil I and his sons should also be noted; see Dagron 2003: 33–35.

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3

REVISITING THE BACHELORHOOD OF BASIL II[1]

Mark Masterson

> '[Emperor] Basil [II] was unmarried and notoriously celibate.'
>
> (Stephenson 2003: 61)

> 'He [Bardas Skleros] did not offer military counsel but gave cunning advice instead . . . [a point in this advice was the following:] don't bring a wife into the palace. . .'
>
> (Michael Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.28)[2]

> (ὁ δὲ ἄρα οὐ στρατηγικὴν βουλὴν, ἀλλὰ πανοῦργον εἰσηγεῖται γνώμην. . .γυναῖκά τε εἰς τὰ βασίλεια μὴ εἰσαγαγεῖν. . .)

> 'Il est possible que, en dépit de tout son zèle normatif pour prohiber les actes homosexuels, la société byzantine les ait en fait tolérés tant qu'ils ne faisaient pas scandale.'
>
> (Laiou 1992: 78)

Basil II was the most accomplished emperor of the Macedonian dynasty. Emblem of Byzantine success in the Middle Ages, he receives glowing press in historical accounts. Military triumph and consolidation of imperial power are hallmarks of a lengthy reign, effectively as sole emperor,[3] that stretched from 976 to 1025. Probably born in 958, he was associated with his father Romanos II as emperor from an early age. When Romanos died in 963, he was subordinate first to his mother Theophano, who was regent (963), then to emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), and finally to emperor John I Tzimiskes (969–976). And even after Tzimiskes was no longer on the throne, all authority was not his: unofficially, but in a real way, he shared the rule with his powerful great-uncle, the eunuch Basil the *parakoimomenos*, until the mid-980s.[4] Among his accomplishments, once he was sole emperor, were the bloody suppression of the Bulgarian state, significant land legislation against the interests of the major families, and a bulging treasury by the end of his reign.[5] Basil also faced significant revolts early on: those of Bardas Skleros (976–979 and 987–989) and Bardas Phokas (987–989). Great-great-grandson of

Basil I, Basil II traced his Macedonian lineage down from him through Leo VI and Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, to his father, Romanos II. He also counted another emperor, Romanos I Lekapenos, as a great-grandfather. Lineage and marriage were important in this dynasty and in Byzantine society as a whole. Basil had been betrothed along with his brother, Constantine, to Bulgarian princesses when he was young.[6] Given the importance of lineage which will keep members of the dynasty on the throne in the eleventh century well past Basil's death, it is remarkable that he did not take a wife at some point over the course of his reign. Holmes has called him an 'elusive figure'.[7] His bachelorhood is the most elusive thing about him.

This chapter will discuss the fact that Basil did not wed. The goal is to rebalance the scholarship on this question, as discussion of his unmarried state has been problematic, and frequently obfuscatory. Taking Michael Psellos' portrait of Basil as a generally grim man as a starting point, scholarly accounts have often explained his demurral to wed by making him a monk manqué whose asceticism has a vague religious basis. At other times, it is considered possible that he wished to avoid meddling in-laws. While Psellos reports that Basil did affect a spare demeanor and we can imagine that the prospect of a wife's relatives might have given him pause, these things do not conclusively answer the question of why he remained a bachelor. Arguments to come will explore the possibility that the enigmatic and never married Basil was perceived to be, at least at times, interested in same-sex sexual encounters.

A parable from Symeon the New Theologian's *Oratio Ethica* 10, in which an emperor takes a rebel to bed, makes a strong, though suggestive statement about same-sex sexual desires in Basil II. Seen in relation to evolving attitudes toward same-sex sexual behaviour between men in Byzantium, the political situation in Basil's reign, Symeon's position as an ecclesiastical leader both apart from the secular world and in it, and the depiction of emperor and his court in Symeon's writings, this work from the early 1000s gives evidence for a stream of thought about the bachelorhood of the current emperor. Symeon's text strongly suggests that some of Basil's compatriots felt comfortable attributing same-sex desire to their emperor. Indeed, while we cannot know the truth – Basil, invisibly to history, could have been visiting female prostitutes, for example – a narrative of interest in same-sex encounters is better supported than one of sexuality refused altogether, or, needless to say, one of desire for women alone. The ultimate conclusion is this: the question of Basil's bachelorhood should remain an open one; he did not marry for reasons that are hard to make out, and it is quite possible that same-sex desires were a contributing factor in his decision.

The state of the question of Basil's bachelorhood

Most of the time, scholars explain the bachelorhood of Basil with evidence from Psellos and, at times, Ademarus Cabannensis (Adémar de Chabannes). Psellos provides a grim and ascetic demeanor and Ademarus a vow that Basil supposedly

made to become a monk. Asceticism and (sometimes) a vow thus explain imperial bachelorhood. Concern about in-laws sometimes supplements this explanation, or is offered by itself, about which, more below. But the question of his bachelorhood is not as settled as it sometimes is implied, or is said to be.[8] But first, as I aim to trouble the combination of Psellos and Ademarus as a basis for approaching Basil's bachelorhood, we need to consider the evidence of these two authors and its use by scholars.

Psellos' portrait of Basil in Book One of the *Chronographia* is an overwhelming presence in scholarly commentary on Basil's unmarried state. Of particular importance is the austere manner Psellos says Basil assumed after he put down the revolts of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas. Psellos says that he was different prior to the revolts; he 'used to feast openly and frequently made love (θαμὰ ἤρα)'.[9] After these revolts, Basil was 'carried away from luxury by full sails, and he held himself to endeavor with all his soul',[10] and once Bardas Phokas' head had been presented to him,[11]

> the emperor became someone else, and the changed state of affairs was gladdening him no more than had the terror of events vexed him. Subsequently, he was seen to be suspicious of all, haughty in his bearing, hiding his thoughts, quick to anger and heavy in his wrath with those who made mistakes.[12]

This grim affect was correlated by sober dress,[13] possible asceticism,[14] and a court that was, in Psellos' opinion, insufficiently brilliant.[15] It is probable, too, that Psellos addresses Basil's unmarried state in the advice he says Bardas Skleros gave him, when Basil and he met after his second revolt ended:

> He [Bardas Skleros] did not offer military counsel but gave cunning advice instead . . . [a point in this advice was the following:] don't bring (εἰσαγαγεῖν) a wife (γυναῖκα) into the palace (τὰ βασίλεια).[16]

While there is scope in how one reads *eisagagein, gynaika*, and *ta basileia*, the most natural interpretation of this passage is that Bardas is telling Basil not to marry.[17]

In recent decades, scholars have shown awareness of the constructed nature of Psellos' account and of complexities in it that militate against viewing his Basil as only dour.[18] Barbara Crostini has underscored how Psellos speaks to his eleventh-century audience about an imperial court proper to the empire and Basil's provides an example not to be followed. Psellos' narrative is tendentious at times, for, as Crostini has pointed out, a number of Basil's associates were estimable intellects[19] and cultivated letters from them have survived.[20] Lynda Garland notes that Psellos has often been read in ways that are reductive of the complexity of his portrait of Basil: not grim all the time, he joked.[21] Crostini counsels that Psellos is not that reliable and Garland suggests that he

be read with greater care. Taking a different tack, Catherine Holmes calls less and more directly for decreased reliance on Psellos to understand Basil's reign.[22] She has presented a case for putting John Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Histories* into a commanding position.[23] She also offers nuanced understandings of the varied relationships Basil had with the leading families in the empire and the essential role the military played in the maintenance of his power.[24]

Still, though, this nuancing of Psellos and salutary addition of Skylitzes has had no effect on understandings of Basil's bachelorhood. One reason for this is the fact that neither Psellos nor Skylitzes discusses it, though, as noted above, Psellos at least mentions it when he speaks of not bringing a wife into the palace. In any case, when addressing his demurral to wed, scholars to a person do not see same-sex desire as a possible driver in Basil's unmarried state. The *Chronographia*'s proffered grim affect leading into asceticism[25] sets most of the agenda, along with occasional speculation that he did not want troublesome in-laws. Basil did not marry because he had embraced 'an ascetic way of life early in his reign'.[26] He, now 'cruel and austere' after 989 and '[having spent] his bachelorhood in various love affairs'[27] (a characterisation that places much weight on Psellos' θαμὰ ἤρα,[28] and indeed, assumes much about both the Greek verb and the matter at hand), did not take a wife because he wanted 'to avoid meddling by a wife or her relatives'.[29] Shaun Tougher does not think 'sexual preference' was at issue and finds it 'likely that his decision [not to wed] was taken on religious grounds'.[30] Still others think there was a religious vow.[31] Religiously motivated asceticism is possible, but the vow, as Crostini pointed out, is not supported by Psellos' text.[32] Indeed, Psellos never connects Basil's moods and affect to his bachelorhood and bachelorhood is addressed only by Bardas Skleros in his advice.[33]

The reader will note the idea of a vow confirming Basil in his bachelorhood is not found in Psellos. This vow that leads Basil full sail away from marriage is found in another text, the *Chronicon* of Ademarus Cabannensis. This work, penned in France in the early years of the eleventh century,[34] is the highly unreliable centrepiece of Martin Arbagi's 1975 article 'The celibacy of Basil II'. This article, which is cited often and even recently,[35] is problematic and should no longer be the go-to on the subject of Basil's celibacy. What makes the prize piece of evidence, Ademarus' *Chronicon*, so unreliable?

In the third book of the *Chronicon* (a work concerned mostly with the history of France and the Franks), Ademarus relates how Basil swore to become a monk if he defeated the Bulgarians. Ademarus' narrative in general has problems, chief among them mistakes about what happened during Basil's lengthy conflict with the Bulgarians.[36] But Ademarus' handling of the chronology of the vow and its fulfilment particularly diminishes his persuasiveness as a source on Basil:

> [E]nraged at them (*sc.* the Bulgarians), emperor Basil bound himself with a vow to God that he would become a monk, if he could subdue the Bulgarian people for the Greeks . . . [and once success was

> achieved] . . . just as he had promised with his vow, he assumed the monastic way of life in the Greek style for the rest of his life [from 1018 going forward; through perhaps from 1014], abstaining from sexual pleasure and meat, while he was surrounded on the outside by imperial regalia.[37]

With defeat of the Bulgarians achieved once and for all in 1018, though it is possible to regard the vow as acted on in 1014 with the Bulgarians' disastrous defeat at the Battle of Kleidion (an important event *not* mentioned in Ademarus' account), this means that Basil finally keeps his promise to God when he is around sixty years old (1018), or perhaps around his fifty-sixth birthday (1014). So, according to Ademarus, Basil's determination to bring the dangerous Bulgarian state to heel was the reason for his bachelorhood. But a vow to become a monk fulfilled so late in life, while providing an answer, raises questions: what, for example, happened in the years before? In any case, Arbagi finds Ademarus useful because his depiction of Basil's character is 'uncannily accurate', by which he means it corroborates what Psellos says.[38] This then means that we should believe other things, including the vow.

In an article concerned with Ademarus himself that takes the position that Basil did not make a vow but was just inclined to asceticism,[39] R.L. Wolff discusses Ademarus' tastes for forgery and delusion which are relevant here. In addition to his demonstrable ignorance of the realities of Basil's reign, Ademarus shows himself to be untrustworthy in general: he tried his utmost to make St. Martial the thirteenth apostle, even forging documents to bolster his case.[40] In any case, to the extent that Wolff speaks of Basil's asceticism, he replicates a simplified version of Psellos' viewpoint. Wolff also vaporises Ademarus as testimony to Basil's bachelorhood, and we, now having no vow, lean hard on Psellos' characterisation of Basil's grim sense of purpose in performing his duties and a suite of mostly unmotivated actions in Ademarus.

In considering the general effect of scholarship that uses Psellos and Ademarus, sometimes via Arbagi and sometimes not, to understand Basil's character and bachelorhood, we will note that Psellos is used to validate Ademarus who only, we are to believe, exaggerated things. The question of Basil's celibacy, which is of great interest from the standpoint of gender studies and should attract careful attention because of its nearly unprecedented nature,[41] is not well explained by reductive reading, on the one hand, of one source that advertises its literary constructedness, and, on the other hand, by use of a source from an author known to be mendacious and who clearly has only the vaguest idea of what was going on in the Byzantine empire.

While it cannot be said for sure why this yoking of cultivated Byzantine man of letters with shifty Frankish chronicler has not received the hard questioning it deserves, it seems to me anxiety about possible sexual 'irregularity' in the great military emperor has disabled critical faculties. Leaving Basil unmarried amid his exceedingly homosocial court, into which no wife was

to enter (γυναῖκά τε εἰς τὰ βασίλεια μὴ εἰσαγαγεῖν[42]), could lead to questions about same-sex desire. And so unconscious or not so unconscious nervousness among scholars about same-sex desire and sexual relations has kept this unlikely team yoked and pulling the wagon, as it were, of Basil's bachelorhood (when the question has been broached at all). But we need not remain in this unsatisfactory place. There is other evidence, probably ignored because of reasons just stated and because of its metaphorical nature, which is contemporary and situated in Basil's milieu: a parable from Symeon the New Theologian's *Oratio Ethica* 10.

Symeon's evidence

Symeon the New Theologian was a monk, *hegoumenos* of a monastery, possessor of an oratory, and important ecclesiastical writer who was a little older than Basil and a eunuch.[43] His dates were probably 949–1022. Before becoming a monk he held a position, *spatharokoubikoularios*, in the imperial court.[44] If, as seems likely, *Catecheses* features a moment of autobiography,[45] Symeon was well informed about the ways and means of exciting same-sex desire at this point of his life,[46] though he later embraced virtue. He probably wrote the tenth *Oratio Ethica*, as part of a set of fifteen orations, during the first decade of the 1000s, which was a time when he was at odds with Basil and the imperial government. Darrouzès thought the tenth oration and the others in the collection bear the marks of struggle.[47] In this difficult decade, he lost control of the St. Mamas monastery in Constantinople,[48] after having been tried for fostering allegedly improper reverence for his recently deceased mentor, Symeon Eulabes.[49] In the middle of the decade he was also tried for heresy,[50] and at the decade's end he went into exile across the Bosporus to Chrysopolis.[51] There, one of Symeon's lay supporters, Christopher Phagoura, bought him an oratory dedicated to St. Marina at Paloukiton.[52] He resided there until his death.[53]

The tenth *Oratio Ethica* contains a parable of an emperor who forgives a rebel. This parable is drenched in same-sex eroticism. Arguments to come will suggest that a Byzantine audience would have had reason to think of Basil when hearing/reading the parable and that Symeon could have wanted this.[54] First, though, what is this oration and its parable?

The prevailing theme of Symeon's tenth *Oratio Ethica*, called *On the Fearful Day of the Lord and On the Judgement to Come* (Περὶ τῆς φοβερᾶς τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς μελλούσης κρίσεως), is that life should be lived as though the Final Judgement were already present. Living this way is not hard to do.[55] The light speaks in the here and now.[56] Living in accordance with God's commandments is to have it as easy as a rebel does in a parable Symeon offers as an illustrative example (10.234: *paradeigma*/παραδεῖγμα). In this lengthy parable,[57] Symeon tells the story of a rebel who was in the service of an opponent of the emperor of the Christians.[58] The emperor tries to persuade the rebel to defect and, rewarded, join him on the throne:

> He was given secret messages through various means by the emperor of the Christians that he should come to him, be with him, receive great gifts, and rule with him.[59]

This man initially is not persuaded and even redoubles his hostility.[60] Ultimately, he surrenders, showing much stagey regret: 'Going to the emperor and embracing his feet, he begged with wailing for pardon'.[61] The emperor accepts, and his acceptance is quite demonstrative:

> '[The emperor] fell upon his neck and kissed him'[62] all over and [kissed too] those eyes of him [i.e., the rebel] which were shedding tears for many hours. Then, having ordered that a crown, robe, and shoes similar to those he was wearing be brought, he himself personally clothed his erstwhile enemy and opponent, in all ways avoiding any verbal abuse of him. And not only this, but as he was rejoicing in him all day and all night, holding him tight, embracing him lovingly, mouth to mouth, to so great extent did he 'over-love' him that he did not separate himself from him in sleep, lying down with him, holding him tight on the bed, covering him completely with his *paludamentum*,[63] and putting his face on all his members.[64]

This is certainly erotic and carnal. Over the years it has struck some readers as excessive.[65] Symeon signals that it is excessive by saying that the emperor did not merely love the rebel, he 'over-loved' (ὑπερηγάπησεν) him. This verb with its prepositional prefix *hyper*/ὑπέρ pushes the reader or listener to the conclusion that something is too much. *Hyper* is an invitation to interpretation. The question we will consider here is what the possible semantics of this excess are.

A first approach to this 'excessive' carnal content might regard the sheer inappropriateness of the imagery as a fitting depiction of the singularity that is the fearful day of Final Judgement. As the Final Judgement is the end of all things, there is nothing to which it is comparable. The worldly ways and means of sex between men hardly fit this incomparable celestial event. The metaphor stages the inevitable failure of representation and the event's incomparability. The passage as a whole is ironic and gestural on this reading.

A second approach to the 'excessive' carnal content might think in terms of the continuities things of this world have with things celestial. Seeing the parable in relation to Symeon's frequent embrace of the corporeal, Derek Krueger 'argue[s] that Symeon employs same-sex desires in order to emphasize the male monastic body as a locus of *theōsis*, the deification of humanity'.[66] Indeed, Symeon's embrace of the bodily leads him, in the context of making a point about the Incarnation, to say that even as his finger is Christ, so also is his penis (*balanos*).[67] And so this passage speaks to the nature of the Incarnation[68] and only 'over-love',

the word and not the entire passage, is the locus of an irony. Another way to put this is that *hyper* brings to a reader's or listener's notice the understanding of someone who is sceptical about the nature of the Incarnation and connections between this world and the next.

But there is more to note. 'Over-love', advertising excess as it does, counsels the listener/reader to think about how this instance of forgiveness has discontinuities with other portrayals of forgiveness. This is emphatically a direction to go in, for there is a portrayal ready to hand. Symeon quotes Luke 15:20, a text that all in his audience would have known. The carnal approach to forgiveness on display in Symeon's parable far outpaces Luke (from the tale of the prodigal son):

> While he [the prodigal son] was still keeping himself a fair ways away, his father saw him. He felt compassion, and, running, he fell upon his neck and kissed him.[69]

The demonstrativeness in Luke is chaster: none of the togetherness day and night, covering *paludamentum*, or face on all the members. The parable, therefore, is no moment of scriptural exegesis but a registering of distance, and the emperor's distance from the paradigm offered by the New Testament is an implicit criticism of the emperor.

Luke is not the only text that can underscore via comparison the parable's excessiveness, the semantics of which again is disapproval. The fact that Symeon was also the currently embattled, or recently dispossessed, leader of the monastery of St. Mamas could have called to mind another scene of imperial forgiveness: that by emperor Maurice (582–602). The monastery of St. Mamas was founded by Maurice,[70] and this emperor features in a parable concerning him and a bandit in Anastasius of Sinai's oration (c. 700) on Psalm Six.[71] In this parable of imperial forgiveness, Anastasius relates how an arch-bandit (*archileistes*), who had been laying waste to Thrace, was made good through the forgiving excellence of the emperor. The bandit meets Maurice, and like a sheep falls to the emperor's feet, embraces them, and begs forgiveness. Maurice grants it. The bandit falls mortally ill shortly thereafter. While the bandit was breathing his last, his doctor saw a vision of the weighing of the sins of the *archileistes*. Things do not look good for the bandit, whose misdeeds are weighty. But two angels discover the bandit's tears on his tunic and these outweigh the sins. Awakening from his dream, the doctor rushes to find the body of the *archileistes* still warm. The doctor then tells the emperor everything, remarking that the bandit helped himself through his confessions to authorities celestial and terrestrial:

> I have heard that the bandit was saved through confession to the cross of the heavenly emperor, and I know that the bandit was [also] saved through confession to your imperiality (ἐπὶ τῆς σῆς βασιλείας).[72]

In comparison, Symeon's emperor of the Christians (which is what Anastasius calls Maurice too: *PG* 89: 1112A) is excessive and, as in the case of comparison with the scene in Luke, surely 'over-loving' if the reader has Maurice in mind; an embrace of his feet is the extent of bodily contact with the bandit. Nor does Maurice put the bandit in a position of authority or dress him in imperial raiment. Symeon's over-loving emperor shows excess at the level of the body (bed) and excess in giving up authority (this man becomes co-emperor). Luke says that Symeon's emperor's behaviour falls short of the New Testament, and memory of Maurice's *archileistes* makes the parable legible as commentary on the current holder of the throne, Basil II. This homoerotic behaviour, excessive, is quite the semantic vehicle. But how serious a thing would this be to attribute to Basil? On the basis of other moments in Symeon's works, civic and canon law, and a contemporary saint's life, it will be argued presently that same-sex sexual behaviour was a carnal temptation and not the serious business it was for a time in earlier centuries or would be in early-modern and later western Europe. Implying that Basil, obstinately unmarried, had tastes in the direction of other men, was not as serious as some now might imagine.

The weight of homoeroticism in medieval Byzantium

The parable is not the only place in his works where Symeon speaks of desire and sex between men.[73] In *Hymn* 24, amid continually asserting that since all are sinners, sin need not be a barrier to eventual communion with Christ, Symeon admits to being a sodomite: 'I became, alas, an adulterer in my heart and a sodomite in reality and by disposition'.[74] Later he gives the impression that he, when young and handsome (καθ' ὥραν), was sexually penetrated:

> How was I able to bear in silence those things happening during my desirable young manhood, and, O my God, those things being done in wretched me?[75]

This hymn also features confession of many sins. He admits, for example, to being a male prostitute, a magician, and a pederast, all in line seventy-six.[76] The scale of misbehaviour poses the question whether some of his admissions are less than real and are, instead, rhetorical didactic.[77] Adjudication of the question of rhetoric versus reality postpones a necessary discussion, though, for a different question, 'Why this didactic rhetoric?', is one that demands a hearing. For Symeon says, to the discomfort of some scholars,[78] that adultery was merely aspirational, and that sodomy, suited to his desires, happened (σοδομίτης ἔργῳ καὶ προαιρέσει). This sin seems more real, and this greater degree of reality shows this desire to be less remarkable within Symeon's milieu than we might imagine now. In any case, the words that introduce the parable of rebel and emperor cast the coming corporeality as but an image Symeon had to hand:

> Our master and God has commanded nothing severe, nothing burdensome, but, instead, things, all of them, easy and simple, just as – believe me – I myself know the command of God and the obtaining of him and his kingdom to be a simple thing. But I will show you this through an example. . .[79]

After finishing the parable, Symeon brings home its offhand nature in words that soon follow. Getting right with God is approaching him without pretension and running naked:

> Therefore, my beloved brothers, leaving everything behind, let us run naked and, coming to Christ, our master, let us fall down and wail in the face of his goodness, so that he, having seen our faith and humility, in similar fashion and even to a greater degree, may receive us, hold us in honour, and bestow on us his robe and diadem, and make us guests worthy of the celestial bridal chamber.[80]

Being right with God is as easy and true as corporeal intimacy; this pleasure functions as a vivid and effective metaphor. While Symeon's move is hardly unprecedented – the carnal had often provided metaphors since Plato – the reader of the tenth *Oratio Ethica* and other works of Symeon has learned about the 'erotic imaginary available to a middle-Byzantine monastic theologian'[81] and about 'sexuality' in monastic settings in the late tenth to early eleventh centuries. The student of medieval Byzantium does well to remember Symeon's admission of same-sex sexual acts and the ease with which they pass into usable metaphor. A conclusion to draw is that this desire, at least in the time of Symeon and Basil II, was not productive of shame that disabled speech. Indeed, relative ease with same-sex desire is to be found outside of Symeon's writings.

In an important work from 1992, Angeliki Laiou remarks that same-sex sexual behaviour in Byzantium, which was forbidden in civil law, seemingly was not worth attention unless it caused a scandal:

> Il est possible que, en dépit de tout son zèle normatif pour prohiber les actes homosexuels, la société byzantine les ait en fait tolérés tant qu'ils ne faisaient pas scandale.[82]

This revolutionary statement, while not unheralded and occasionally followed up,[83] has not affected the study of Byzantine sexuality as much as it should have. There is evidence that this is the correct attitude to take. Scandalous sexual impropriety between men does not appear in the historical record of the middle Byzantine period. Regulations in civil law, mandating execution for sexual acts between males (although allowances were made for young offenders), appear to have been unused.[84] Furthermore, it has been suggested, and the historical record with its lack of executions is persuasive, that the laws were just copied.[85] Observation

of the sequence of laws from the eighth century into the tenth supports this idea. *Ekloge* 17.38 (AD 741),[86] *Eklogadion* 17.6 (early ninth century),[87] *Epanagoge* 40.66 (AD 886),[88] and *Prokheiros* 39.73 (AD 907)[89] are terse, all four of them, and they repeat one another with but small variations.[90]

In contrast to civil law, regulations of a more liberal kind developed around same-sex behaviour in canon law. The fourth century had seen rigorous disapproval of same-sex relations in the penitentials. Basil of Caesarea's Canon Sixty-Two[91] recommended fifteen years of excommunication and Gregory of Nyssa's Canon Four[92] eighteen for same-sex relations between men, referred to as 'shamefulness in men' (Basil: ἀσχημοσύνη ἐν τοῖς ἄρρεσιν) and 'madness against the male' (Gregory: ἡ κατὰ τοῦ ἄρρενος λύσσα). Later in medieval times, the rigor of the Cappadocian Fathers is left behind. Theodore the Studite (eighth to ninth centuries) recommends in his Canon Twenty only two years' excommunication,[93] if it is clear that the man will no longer be engaging in 'shamefulness in men'.[94] Men who pay no mind to this canon are to serve the entire fifteen years Basil recommends, however.[95] In the ninth or tenth centuries, in a collection that has been (incorrectly) attributed to John the Faster (aka patriarch John IV, 582–595),[96] we again see shorter penances.[97] Canon Eighteen specifies three years instead of Nyssa's eighteen or Basil's fifteen for 'madness for the male' (ἀρρενομανία), and, as in the case of Theodore the Studite's recommendations, the unrepentant can serve Basil's fifteen years.[98] In another canon, sex against nature between men (and the reference is to anal penetration: εἰς ἄνδρα πεσόντες) draws two years of penance for those who did it only 'once, twice or three times' (3: ἅπαξ ἢ δὶς ἢ τρίς), and who were under thirty years of age or unlettered, or not in possession of a wife.[99] Still another canon specifies three years for those who are older and who may be guilty of 'doing this only once, twice or three times' (8: ταῦτα ἅπαξ . . . ποιήσαντες, ἢ δὶς ἢ τρίς).[100] A careful reading of the canons also yields the conclusion that anal sex with another man was less serious than anal sex with one's own wife: the mildest penance for this was five years and could go as high as ten.[101]

The level of detail in these penitentials is also notable. Mutual masturbation between men is mentioned in one,[102] and another features a discussion of anal sex (*asenokoitia*/ἀρσενοκοιτία) that considers the respective statuses of those who receive, those who give, and those who like both:

> Concerning *arsenokoitia. Arsenokoitia* has three different kinds. One is to take it from another. This is less serious, whether on account of being under age, or poverty, or rape, or other various reasons. Another is giving it, and this is more serious than taking it. Then there is taking it from someone else and giving it to another. This defies any explanation.[103]

Even though what we call versatility among gay males today causes an aporetic reaction, it is worth noting that switching positions is a recognised possibility. The take-away, furthermore, is the evident ease about discussing same-sex sexual

relations that one will not find, say, in early-modern western Europe, or earlier among the Cappadocian Fathers. We are not dealing with a situation where desire cannot speak its name: routes to carnal satisfaction are known and discussed. Same-sex sexual acts between men are temptations of the flesh and, as such, are to be avoided, but commission of mutual masturbation or *arsenokoitia* is not an unspeakable failing. Indeed, Symeon's ease in confessing his interest in same-sex sexual behaviour needs to be seen in the context of this (perhaps surprising[104]) liberalising dynamic.

A look at another ecclesiastical text further supports the idea that the Byzantine empire at the time of Basil and Symeon had a degree of relaxation and frankness around same-sex relations between men. In the anonymous *Life of Maria the Younger* from either the tenth or eleventh century,[105] the narrative turns to one of the sons of Maria, Baanes.[106] Though married, the soldier Baanes, beloved by the other soldiers,[107] was particularly close to Theodore. He was 'yoked' to this man and the description of their life together features an excess of corporeality that recalls Symeon's parable, though it is curiously both more metaphorical and more graphic at the same time:

> [Baanes] had a certain Theodore as fellow ascetic and helper in all his excellent exploits . . . a man brave and strong in military matters but braver still in conducting his life for God. Yoked (συζευχθείς) to him, like a bull of good lineage and strong, they were ploughing in one another (ἠροτρίων ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) as though into rich farmland, and they were sowing the seeds of excellences, as though the best of farmers. At the right moment, they cheerfully harvested. They laid up for themselves fruits beautiful to God in divine vats and got for themselves joy forever.[108]

The word, 'yoked' (συζευχθείς), is often used to refer to married couples and it is difficult to suppress thoughts of anal sex as they plough in one another. Corporeal expression of closeness is something that happens, it would appear, and it functions as a metaphor for something else (like Symeon's parable). And the writer does not make it easy for thoughts of anal sex to be left behind, if that is what a reader might like to do. At the beginning of the next section, less than one hundred words away, the reader discovers that Baanes' final illness was a diseased bowel.[109] Furthermore, this relationship between Baanes and Theodore was not *sui generis*. Their closeness is prefigured by the relationship that Maria's husband Nikephoros had with a certain Bardas Bratzes.

Bardas was married to Maria's sister and he suggested to his dear friend Nikephoros that he marry Maria. A marriage connection would bring them closer together:

> 'Since,' he says, 'O dearest of men to me, we have become deeply involved with each other and are bound by our intimate relationship (συνηθείας). I think it right to make this, our bond of love (τὸν δεσμὸν

> τοῦτον τῆς ἀγάπης), stronger and more perfect and to apply the ties of kinship to it, so that we may be joined in two ways, forging a family connection along with our intimate relationship. (συνηθείας)'[110]

Nikephoros ultimately followed this advice,[111] and we note that the word Bardas employs to describe the men's intimate relationship, *synetheia*/ συνηθεία, is capable of designating both close friendship and sexual relations.[112] Accordingly, then, two generations of men in this saint's life have strong relationships with other men, and the depiction of these connections have in the case of Nikephoros and Bardas hints of corporeal closeness and, in the case of Theodore and Baanes, bold sexualising imagery. The conclusion to draw here is that intimations of sexual behaviour, and even strong images of carnality, are not scandalous in ecclesiastical contexts.[113] The relative liberality in the penitentials and ecclesiastical writings and the non-enforcement and mechanical reiterations of the civil enactments form the essential background to reading Symeon's writings whenever his attention turns to same-sex relations between men. Indeed, allowing the (perhaps lighter than expected) weight of homoeroticism its full impact clears the way for a reader now to see Symeon's audience seeing in the parable a statement on the 'unmarried and notoriously celibate' emperor Basil II.[114] It was not a serious charge to make and metaphors such as these were allowable.

Basil as Symeon's referent

An understanding that same-sex desire and behaviour were likely and not weighty things for Symeon to discuss is only a precondition for seeing Basil in the parable's emperor. This referentiality must be argued. The bases for the argument to come will be the fact of Basil's bachelorhood, the political situation in his reign, and Symeon's milieu which featured diffusion of his influence and writings among monks and laymen in the capital.

Basil's decision not to wed and play a direct part in the continuation of the Macedonian line was a momentous one. Much attested among the politically powerful,[115] marriage was important, to say the least, in the empire at the time.[116] Not exempt, an emperor was expected to take a wife. The second book of the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, a narrative of ninth-century emperors completed probably in 958,[117] has an episode from the reign of Michael II (820–829) in which this expectation is articulated directly. The anonymous author of this work, perhaps Theodore Daphnopates,[118] who was in any case writing from the heart of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos' court, tells how Michael compelled the senate to beg him to remarry after his first wife had died:

> [The senate, prompted by Michael,] was saying, 'it is not possible for the emperor to live without a wife or for our wives to be deprived of their mistress and empress.'[119]

And so, his hand, as it were, forced,[120] Michael took the hand of Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VI (780–797):[121] an emperor must be married.

From marriage come children of the blood. Possession of Macedonian blood drove political calclulations. This blood surely kept Basil and his brother safe during their minorities when Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes reigned. Blood similarly safeguarded Constantine VII and made him marriageable, as his union with Helena Lekapene, daughter of Romanos I shows. The extension of the Macedonian dynasty through the marriages of Basil's niece Zoe Porphyrogennete in the eleventh century also argues for the blood's importance. One can only imagine the pressure to marry that Basil, star of the fifth generation of the dynasty, resisted.

Not only securing the continuation of the line, marriage could be a powerful bargaining chip. Basil could have married a woman from a powerful family to create an alliance, as his grandfather did when he married Helena Lekapene. Older scholarship generally saw Basil as opposed to the artistocracy as a whole, and so such a move seemed unlikely on these terms.[122] Recent scholarship has suggested Basil's opposition to the major families was selective.[123] Hence, marriage to a woman from one of the families he favoured, say, the Skleroi, is conceivable. However, choosing a wife from one family would have created disappointment in the others. But Basil could have blunted disappointment by not playing a favourite. He could have married a woman of low status. His father, for example, married a comparative nobody, Anastaso in 955 or 956, who took the name Theophano.[124] In the previous century, Basil I's wife, Eudokia Ingerina, was also not lofty.[125] In this way, Basil also could have avoided entanglements with powerful in-laws.[126] But neither a strategic marriage nor one to a nobody occurred, and neither is there any report of illegitimate issue, which had also been heard of, most famously in the person of Basil's own great uncle, Basil the *parakoimomenos*, who was the illegitimate son of Romanos I Lekapenos.

There is a final consideration bearing on Basil's refusal to wed which we must not lose sight of: marriage between man and woman is a place of desire and sex.[127] It was well known, of course, that marriages, especially imperial ones, were about continuation of the line and alliance, but we also read that a beautiful empress attracted desire. Eudokia Ingerina entranced Michael III before he had to give her up and hand her over to Basil the Macedonian.[128] Basil II's great-grandmother, Zoe Karbonopsina (Zoe 'of the coal-black eyes') had a name which advertised her bewitching qualities. Basil's mother, the beautiful Theophano,[129] was said to have awakened strong desire in her second husband, Nikephoros II Phokas.[130] The corporeal rewards to being married were known.

Basil's bachelorhood in and of itself, then, creates a number of visibilities which predispose a reader now and a reader in the eleventh century to see him in Symeon's emperor. Basil was manifestly bucking the expectation that an emperor wed and continue the imperial line through begetting sons. He also refused a salient connection with another family that would have occurred through marriage to and the bedding of one of their women. Finally, to the extent that marriage was

seen as the site of enjoyable sexual activity with a woman, he was visibly refusing that also. Given that it was possible for him to wed 'low' and avoid entanglements that, say, lofty in-laws might bring, the full-on force of these visibilities generates a question about the nature of his sexual desires. As discussed above, previous scholarship was happy to provide the answer of asceticism, but this is not a water-tight case and actually does not answer the question. If it is assumed that he was refusing sex, what kind of sex was he refusing? At this moment, the parable of Symeon becomes interesting. It provides a reading of the desire of the emperor: he is at least some of the time, if not more than that, interested in homoerotic encounters. This reading becomes more convincing when we consider the political situation in Basil's reign.

Basil struggled with rebels early in reign. He forgave some and punished others. The emperor in the parable 'over-loved' (ὑπερηγάπησεν) a rebel. Does the parable provide a likely metaphor, given Basil's unmarried state, for this favouring that came to some, and not to others – others who would have found imperial forgiveness excessive? For example, Basil was surprisingly mild to one rebel, Bardas Skleros,[131] and his son, Romanos, took a place in Basil's inner circle. Skylitzes reports that after the fall of his uncle, Basil the *parakoimomenos*, Basil needed new advisors, and he found one in Romanos Skleros:

> After he had received him with exceedingly friendly intention and excessive joy, he [Basil] honoured this one [Romanos] as *magistros* and he was using him as an advisor in every aspect of his warring . . . he [Basil] deprived of the counsel of him [Basil the *parakoimomenos*] and needing friends and allies in his struggles, at the time truly welcomed Romanos, knowing him to be a man quick-witted, energetic, and just the one for the things of war.[132]

The Phokades, and others in a similar position, may have felt the emperor 'over-loved' some rebels. The head of Bardas Phokas, torn from his dismembered body,[133] took a trip to Constantinople and then to Asia Minor after his revolt ended.[134] And just prior, Basil either had Kalokyres Delphinas[135] 'hanged on wood'[136] or impaled.[137] His legislation against aristocratic interests, e.g. the law against the 'powerful' (*dynatoi*) from 996,[138] would not have been perceived as showing love, much less 'over-love'. But what is to be noted, and which is supported by recent scholarship on Basil's reign, is that his opposition to the magnates was a sometime thing.[139] From the point of view of someone not favoured, it could be said Basil played favourites. We may imagine that the extravagent forgiveness of some in the eyes of those not so honoured would have been galling. Symeon's emperor's carnal forgiveness is a metaphor for the favour Basil showed to some of his former enemies.

But this argument that Basil could be perceived as the referent in the parable depends additionally on seeing Symeon commenting on current politics in his oration. It is plausible to see him doing this for a number of reasons. In the first

place, Basil had been the emperor for a long time by the time the *Orationes Ethicae* were written in the first decade of 1000s. Any reference to an emperor will encourage a reader or listener to compare and contrast Basil to the emperor appearing in the text. Second, Symeon had been struggling with Basil and his representatives, and the marks of struggle have been seen in the *Orationes Ethicae*. Darrouzès remarks that the *Orationes Ethicae* 'sont en grande partie une œuvre de controverse ou du moins composée durant une période de controverses'.[140] The struggles, as noted above, were these: Symeon lost his monastery, St. Mamas;[141] he got in trouble for fostering what was seen as inappropriate rites to the memory of his mentor, Symeon Eulabes;[142] he even stood trial for heresy.[143] All this happened in the decade or so prior to the writing of *Oratio Ethica* 10. A critical perspective on the emperor becoming visible in Symeon's works would not have been and is not surprising. Furthermore, the parable of the forgiveness of the rebel is not a singular event in Symeon's works. Emperor and imperial court appear elsewhere in his works.

Ambivalence and complexity characterise Symeon's metaphoric use of the emperor and his court. On the one hand, the magnificence and power of the emperor made imperial favour an apt metaphor for desirable divine interventions, such as God's grace, as seen in the parable from *Oratio Ethica* 10. On the other hand, Symeon shows an interest in bringing emperors down to earth.[144] The carnality of the parable is an illustration of this. Reading other references by Symeon to the emperor together with the parable, we see that he finds emperor and court useful metaphors for divinity but also all too human and of this earth at the same time. Indeed, the image of the emperor in Symeon's thought is ambivalent, exhibiting idealising and critical perspectives simultaneously. What this means is that the emperor in the parable with the rebel is a figure that embodies both God and an actual emperor, the latter of whom will be human and fallible, indeed the latter predominates in other examples from Symeon's works.

At *Catecheses* 2.107–109,[145] Symeon critically observes that the earthly emperor has no time for the poor, cannot bear to look at them, and is no better than arrogant rich men are.[146] *Catecheses* 4.470–472 is also critical: 'the emperor separate from his army becomes weak and vulnerable to all and sundry and no longer appears to be emperor'.[147] Making reference to 2 Samuel 12, Symeon counsels in another *catechesis* that emperors (and other leaders) would do well to keep in mind that king David admitted his fault to Nathan and fell to the ground before him (the implication being that this advice from the Septuagint is not followed as often as it should be).[148] A final and significant example from Symeon's works features not only ambivalence about the emperor (and his court) but also employs the verb 'over-love'/ὑπεργαπάω, which is the same word used in the parable from *Oratio Ethica* 10.

Symeon wrote the *Capita Theologica*, a work of practical instruction on virtues and vices, after he was removed as hegoumenos of St. Mamas.[149] In the eighth section of the second book of this work, he compares the pious elation a monk feels when 'called aloft to the height of contemplation of the Holy Spirit'[150]

to the pleasure the emperor can give when he bestows earthly position and riches. At the end of the comparison, Symeon compares donning Christ to being clothed in imperial purple:

> For he [the monk who has withdrawn from the world[151]] looks always upon the grace of the Spirit shining around him, this grace which is called a raiment and imperial purple, or rather it is Christ himself, if [we care to say, and of course we do, that] those who have faith in him are clothed in him.[152]

But this is not the entirety of the comparison. Symeon earlier describes the promotion in detail. Characteristically for Symeon, his comparison overshoots the mark by describing a scene whose corporealities make it an imperfect metaphor, and, hence, a text that additionally has criticism of the earthly emperor on its mind:

> Just as the one who has been raised from the most extreme poverty by the emperor, who has been clothed by him in brilliant office and a shining robe, who has been ordered to stand in his presence, just as this one looks upon the emperor with desire (μετὰ πόθου), over-loves (ὑπεραγαπᾷ) him as his benefactor, studies intently the robe in which he has been clothed, knows well his office, and thinks about the wealth that has been given to him.[153]

The emperor can raise up a man who is a nobody and clothe him in office and robes. This benefaction awakens intense regard (desire/πόθος) in the one so honoured and he even 'over-loves' (ὑπεραγαπᾷ) the emperor in return. As in the parable from the tenth *Oratio Ethica*, though not in as graphic a manner, Symeon calls to mind erotic desire through the use of the noun *pothos*. Even closer to the parable is the appearance of the verb 'over-love' (ὑπεραγαπάω). In contrast to the passage from *Oratio Ethica* 10, however, 'over-loving' does not rain down from above, but rises up from below. If we read this passage from the *Capita Theologica* together with the parable in order to come to an understanding of Symeon's ideas about desire and promotion in the imperial court, we can make two points. First, 'over-loving' is something that does not belong solely to superior or inferior but can be expressed by either.[154] Second, the imperial court is a place of excess, for, as with the parable, the picture of relations in the court has a surfeit of things of this world that make it a metaphor that does not quite fit. 'Over-loves' (ὑπεραγαπᾷ) conveys some disapproval. The one, whom the emperor has promoted, loves his royal highness, the gorgeous clothing, office and wealth to come more than is right, hence the 'over' (ὑπέρ). Is Basil's court, missing an empress and therefore skewed to homosociality, visible here?

Ambivalence, accordingly, is present, or perhaps it is better to say that Symeon has his cake and eats it too. The comparison to imperial privilege and raiment

makes the attainment of grace and Christ the *ne plus ultra*, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, a critical stance to these marks of worldly advancement is also visible. The courtier has reached a summit of earthly ambition and so the metaphor is effective. But the courtier so honoured does not merely love, he 'over-loves'. He places too great a value on the things of this world. Same-sex desire with its worldly corporealities complicates this picture in a similar fashion, especially for those who live in Symeon's thought world and/or may know the parable from *Oratio Ethica* 10.[155]

And so we come to a key assertion. It is all well and good to demonstrate that Symeon was capable of twice constructing metaphors of imperial favour – metaphors containing same-sex desire and 'over-love' – that both gesture in the direction of God and divine grace, and, yet, venture criticism of the emperor at the same time. In the absence of an audience, such a thing would be but a dead letter. But Symeon's writings were not solipsistic and removed from life. We must not imagine that his thought world was limited to him or to a small circle of readers or listeners. Symeon was almost never far away from action in the capital. Indeed, he was within the city walls for all those years at St. Mamas, and later was just across the Bosporos at Paloukiton at St. Marina's. Furthermore, the secondary literature discusses much interaction between monks and laymen.[156] As an estimable ecclesiastical leader, Symeon was spiritual father not only to monks in his own establishment, but also maintained pastoral connections to men in the world.[157] As noted above, Christopher Phagoura, a layman with whom he was connected, set him up in his oratory at Paloukiton.[158] Politics did not cease at the monastery door, indeed the door was open to traffic coming in and going out. Lastly, it seems quite likely that the *Orationes Ethicae* were addressed to an audience both monastic and secular.[159] This was a broad audience for whom Basil would have been the only emperor in living memory: any parable about an emperor would have been measured against Basil for similarities and differences at least momentarily. It is logical in light of the facts about Basil, the political situation, and the context within which Symeon was writing to assume that the parable from *Oratio Ethica* 10 could have been seen as commentary on the current emperor's policies and sexual life.

Conclusion

Symeon's emperor is not only an idealised figure. He is both an idealising metaphor and, at the same time, liable to criticism for being too much of this world. When Symeon criticises an emperor, at that moment the current holder of the throne, Basil II, comes into view. And so Symeon provides a reading of Basil's bachelorhood. Symeon would have had reason to wish to render some criticism, and his excessive portrayal in the parable from *Oratio Ethica* 10 in a variety of ways encourages the reader to form a question about bachelor Basil's desire: did he spend the time he saved by not being married with other men?

The old idea that he spent this time in celibacy dedicated to God has weaker support. Ademarus is not persuasive due to demonstrated ignorance and mendacity. Also, far away and from another milieu altogether, he was not capable of understanding the evolving attitudes toward same-sex desire in Constantinople during these centuries. Psellos speaks of Basil's grimness and rather more than that, if we read him carefully with Crostini and Garland. We likely have a hint of Basil's unmarried state in the advice Psellos reports Bardas Skleros gave to Basil. But that is all. In contrast, Symeon's parable has a possible referent in Basil because of the question about desire his bachelorhood posed, his differential treatment of rebels, and the milieu in which Symeon wrote. We cannot and I do not want to rule out a possible taste for women on Basil's part, but we have no evidence of that and instead have an indication, via Symeon, that he had same-sex interests. Symeon had an axe to grind and it is plausible that he might have liked to deliver a chop – a chop, it must be understood, that would not be devastating, but rather to point out a carnal failing. The imperial court, of which he had experience earlier in his life,[160] was too materialistic in its practices and should hardly be telling him what to do. Exclusively homosocial, with no wife in sight, the court was liable to 'over-loving' excesses. We should view Symeon's critique as something of a throwaway. It was not devastating and illuminates our understanding of same-sex desire among men in Byzantium at this time.

Notes

1 I thank Shaun Tougher for the opportunity to speak and write on Basil II and for his understanding and guidance. I also thank Stephanie Cobb, Derek Krueger, Nancy Rabinowitz, and Steven Smith for their advice.
2 All translations are my own.
3 His brother, Constantine VIII (1025–1028), was also emperor throughout this time, but all sources agree that he was side-lined until Basil's death: see for instance Tougher 2013: esp.316–318. Be it noted that Constantine married.
4 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.19–21, narrates the fall of Basil the *parakoimomenos*. At 1.3, he tells of happier days for the two Basils, great-uncle and grand-nephew. For more on Basil the *parakoimomenos*, see Brokkaar 1972; Tougher 2008: 138. For discussion focusing on his interactions with Basil II, see Crostini 1996: 59–64; Garland 1999a: 326, 326 n.20; Holmes 2003: 58–61; 2005: 469–474; 2006: 331–333.
5 For a classic statement of Basil's success, see Ostrogorsky 1968. Others, e.g. Angold 1997 and Holmes 2005, are sceptical to varying degrees, wondering if the success of the empire under Basil was as solid as it has sometimes been made out to be. See Holmes 2005: 448–543, for narration of his reign, including the major campaigns. For legal enactments, see Svoronos 1994: 185–217. I should note here too that Holmes 2003 and 2005 and Sifonas 1994 have provided welcome nuance to overly schematized accounts of Basil's reign that see him as relentlessly attacking the aristocracy as a whole, for he opposed some families and not others.
6 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 5.3; Shepard 2003: 15; Tougher 2013: 307.
7 Holmes 2005: v. In similar fashion, Garland 1999a: 321, calls Basil 'something of an enigma'.

8 E.g. Garland 1999a: 321, states that the question of Basil's non-marriage has been (close to?) a non-issue since 1975: 'A study by Arbagi (1975) has helped resolve the problem of why Basil never married. . .'.
9 *Chronographia* 1.4: ἀπαρακαλύπτως ἐκώμαζε καὶ θαμὰ ἤρα.
10 *Chronographia* 1.4: ὅλοις ἱστίοις ἀπενεχθεὶς τῆς τρυφῆς, ὅλῳ πνεύματι ἀντείχετο τῆς σπουδῆς.
11 *Chronographia* 1.17: τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐκτεμόντες τῷ Βασιλείῳ προσάγουσιν.
12 *Chronographia* 1.18: Ἐντεῦθεν ἕτερος ἀνθ' ἑτέρου ὁ βασιλεὺς γίνεται, καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον αὐτὸν τὸ γεγονὸς εὔφρανεν, ἢ ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων δεινότης ἠνίασεν· ὕποπτος οὖν εἰς πάντας ὦπτο καὶ σοβαρὸς τὴν ὀφρὺν, τάς τε φρένας ὑποκαθήμενος καὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι δύσοργος καὶ βαρύμηνις.
13 *Chronographia* 1.22.
14 *Chronographia* 1.32.
15 *Chronographia* 1.29; Crostini 1996 shows that Psellos is being particularly tendentious here.
16 *Chronographia* 1.28: ὁ δὲ ἄρα οὐ στρατηγικὴν βουλὴν, ἀλλὰ πανοῦργον εἰσηγεῖται γνώμην . . . γυναῖκά τε εἰς τὰ βασίλεια μὴ εἰσαγαγεῖν. . .
17 It is possible that a reader may think this translation is not correct and that Skleros merely counsels against having a woman at imperial strategy sessions, as Sewter in his translation from 1979 seems to believe. This, however, is to understand the passage in an unnecessarily laboured way. The passage's probable reference to advice to Basil to persist in his bachelorhood is strongly supported by reference to the *LSJ*. We read the following, which is as close to conclusive as can be imagined, at εἰσάγω: 'ἐσαγαγεῖν or ἐσαγαγέσθαι γυναῖκα to lead a wife into one's house, Hdt. 5.40, 6.63'. The reference to Herodotus seals the deal, as Psellos' audience was cultivated. Furthermore, *ta basileia* was a favoured term for 'palace' from early times in Greek, and again this meaning would be a predominant one if we allow the fact of Psellos' audience's cultivation its proper weight. For the record, this passage has not been mentioned in any scholarship that I have seen that has addressed Basil's bachelorhood.
18 Crostini 1996; Holmes 2003: 61–62; 2005: 31–35, 516–517; Garland 1999a: 339–342, brings to light ways in which Psellos presents Basil as a comment on the eleventh-century emperor Isaac I Komnenos (1057–1059).
19 Crostini 1996: 66–71.
20 Crostini 1996: 70 (cf. Van Opstall 2008: 26). Estimable intellects are to be found among Basil's associates. Nikephoros Ouranos and Leo of Synada are two examples. See Darrouzès 1960 for the letters of Nikephoros Ouranos, whose letters are urbane and well-written. Darrouzès 1960 : 48, asserts '[his letters] suffisent pour nous dévoiler le cœur noble et l'esprit cultivé de Nicéphore Ouranos'. See also Vinson's 1985 edition of Leo's letters.
21 Garland 1999a. *Chronographia* 1.20, 27, and 33.
22 Holmes 2003: 61, is the less direct; Holmes 2005: 34, is the more direct.
23 Holmes 2005.
24 Holmes 2005: 463–470, argues persuasively that understanding Basil as opposed to all the aristocratic families, full-stop, is incorrect. It was rather the case that he was against some families and a key issue in the maintenance of his authority was not so much land and revenue as control of the army (cf. Holmes 2003: 48–51, and Sifonas 1994).
25 Note that Psellos offers elsewhere a brief sketch of Basil's grim character: *Historia Syntomos* 106.
26 Angold 1997: 5; cf. Wolff 1978: 144, '[Basil's] personal asceticism is historic fact'.
27 Treadgold 1997: 513.

28 *Chronographia* 1.4.
29 Treadgold 1997: 519; Holmes 2006: 336.
30 Tougher 2013: 307, 'It seems likely that his decision was taken on religious grounds, rather than because of sexual preference, but the fact remains that this was a highly unusual act for a ruler. . .'; cf. Crostini 1996: 76–77.
31 Arbagi 1975; Garland 1999a: 321; Holmes twice reports that others have seen a vow by Basil as an explanation for his failure to wed (Holmes 2006: 336; 2005: 45 n.60). Magdalino 2003: 263–265, suggests that Basil's bachelorhood and religious interests be associated with general feelings in the empire that the millennium was going to bring with it the end of the world; he was unmarried because the end of days was nigh.
32 Crostini 1996: 74–75 (speaking of *Chronographia* 1.18): '[at this point in the *Chronographia*, Psellos only means to speak of] the emperor's zealous undertaking of duty, his business of governing of the state. No fanciful dedication to a religious lifestyle is here implied'. In spite of this, Crostini 1996: 76–77, believes that Psellos elsewhere (at *Chronographia* 1.32) implies that Basil was acting according to religious scruples when his behaviour changed from fun-loving to grim. She even calls it a 'religious conversion' (76). The narrative of Psellos is complex and Crostini perhaps argues against herself here.
33 *Chronographia* 1.28.
34 For background on Ademarus, see Wolff 1978: esp. 139.
35 See for example Tougher 2013: 307; Holmes 2006: 336, 339; Holmes 2005: 19, 45; Stephenson 2003: 73; Garland 1999a: 321.
36 Among the errors are the omission of the Battle of Kleidion, misconceptions about the personnel of the Bulgarian leadership, and the belief that Basil's struggles with the Bulgarians began around the year 1000 (they began in the 980s). For discussion of Ademarus' mistakes, see Arbagi 1975: 43–44, and Wolff 1978: 143–144.
37 *Chronicon* 3.32: [B]asilius imperator super eos nimis irritatus, voto se obligavit Deo monachum fieri, si Grecis gentem Bulgarorum subderet . . . sicut voto promiserat, habitum monasticum greca figura subterindutus in reliquum est omni vitae suae tempore, a voluptate et carnibus abstinens, et imperiali scemate extrinsecus circumdabatur.
38 Arbagi 1975: 44.
39 As noted above, Wolff believes that the severe and ascetic Basil's vow was fictitious.
40 Wolff 1978: 156–158.
41 Tougher 2013: 307, remarks that there was one other emperor who did not wed: Constans I (337–350), son of Constantine I. It is interesting to note in the context of the present investigation that there was discussion in the sources about Constans' interest in same-sex encounters. See my discussion, with bibliography: Masterson 2014: 24 n.53.
42 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.28.
43 For more on Symeon's life, see Messis 2014: 144–148, McGuckin 2005: 1996, and Turner 1990: 16–36, whose narratives in turn depend on Niketas Stethatos' life of Symeon (written in the decades following the death of Symeon in 1022), as rationalized by Hausherr 1928. For a strong statement of the fact of Symeon's eunuch status, see Messis 2014: 144–148.
44 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 3; Turner 1990: 18; McGuckin 1996: 19.
45 *Catecheses* 22.24–28: '[He (=I) had] a young man's beauty and possessed frame, personality, and gait that were like a vision, so that from these [aspects] some men even had raunchy suspicions about him, and others were only looking at his outer aspects and were judging him basely as regards other things. . .' (. . .ὡραῖος τῷ εἴδει καὶ φαντασιῶδες τό τε σχῆμα καὶ τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὸ βάδισμα κεκτημένος, ὡς ἐκ τούτων

καὶ ὑπολήψεις πονηρὰς ἔχειν τινὰς εἰς αὐτόν, τοὺς τὸ ἔξωθεν μόνον βλέποντας περικάλυμμα καὶ κακῶς κρίνοντας τὰ ἀλλότρια. . .).

46 See comment by McGuckin 1996: 19, 'a successful and somewhat rakish youth'.

47 Darrouzès 1966: 8–13, provides a tidy presentation of the contentious atmosphere that most likely surrounded Symeon when he wrote the *Orationes Ethicae*.

48 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 59. Note that Niketas depicts Symeon as resigning from his leadership role voluntarily on account of his love of quiet (ὁ ἔρως τῆς ἡσυχίας). To see this incident (and others from Niketas' life) as suggesting him losing the monastery involves reading through panegyrical content (a necessary if precarious operation). At the moment I follow Turner 1990: 34.

49 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 72.

50 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 75–77.

51 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 95.

52 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 100.

53 See Messis 2014: 145–146, for a chronology that places Symeon's travails a decade or so earlier.

54 Krueger's suggestion (2006: 100) that the parable might recall the political situation in Basil's reign was an important inspiration for this chapter. I will note here that Krueger's goal diverges from mine. Krueger argues that the carnality between emperor and rebel be seen in the context of Symeon's interest in guiding the ascetic practices of his monks with lively and likely imagery; the evocation of homoerotic desire 'is a powerful tool in the making of his monks' (Krueger 2006: 118). It is my hope that my analysis be seen as complementary to his.

55 *Oratio Ethica* 10.229–231.

56 *Oratio Ethica* 10.646.

57 *Oratio Ethica* 10.235–273.

58 *Oratio Ethica* 10.235–236: δουλεύων τινὶ ἀντιδίκῳ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐχθρῷ.

59 *Oratio Ethica* 10.239–241, ἐμηνύθη παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Χριστιανῶν διαφόρως τοῦ προσελθεῖν καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ εἶναι καὶ ἀξιωθῆναι μεγάλων δωρεῶν καὶ συμβασιλεύειν αὐτῷ.

60 *Oratio Ethica* 10.241–243.

61 *Oratio Ethica* 10.252–253: προσελθὼν τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τοὺς πόδας κρατήσας αὐτοῦ, συγχώρησιν μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ ἐξῃτήσατο.

62 Luke 15:20.

63 Χλανίδιον is the Greek translation of *paludamentum*, which is the emperor's cloak (*LSJ*, χλανίδιον).

64 *Oratio Ethica* 10.261–273: 'ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν' [Luke 15:20] τε ὅλον καὶ τοὺς δακρύοντας αὐτοῦ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπὶ ὥρας πολλάς. Εἶτα στέφος καὶ στολὴν καὶ ὑποδήματα ὅμοια ὧν αὐτὸς ἐφόρει ἐνεχθῆναι κελεύσας, αὐτὸς δι' ἑαυτοῦ τὸν πρώην ἐχθρὸν καὶ ἀντίδικον περιέβαλε, μηδὲν ὅλως προσονειδίσας αὐτόν· καὶ οὐ τοῦτο μόνον, ἀλλὰ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας συγχαίρων αὐτῷ καὶ συνευφραινόμενος, περιλαμβάνων τε καὶ κατασπαζόμενος στόμα πρὸς στόμα αὐτόν, τοσοῦτον 'ὑπερηγάπησεν' αὐτὸν ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ ὑπνοῦν αὐτοῦ ἐχωρίζετο, συνανακλινόμενος αὐτῷ καὶ περιλαμβάνων ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης καὶ πάντοθεν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ χλανιδίῳ περισκέπων καὶ ἐπιτιθεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς αὐτοῦ μέλεσιν.

65 See Krueger 2006: 101, on the anxiety this passage has awakened in some of Symeon's modern commentators.

66 Krueger 2006: 99.

67 Krueger 2006: 109; *Hymn* 15.161–162.

68 Krueger 2006: 108–109.

69 ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος εἶδεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη καὶ δραμὼν ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν.

70 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 34, mentions that St. Mamas was founded by Maurice when he discusses Symeon's renovations to the monastery.

71 *PG* 89: 1112–1116. This work exists in two nearly identical versions. The parable can also be found at *PG* 89: 1140–1142. I limit my discussion to the first version. Darrouzès 1967: 279, drew my attention to this parable from Anastasius in a note appended to Symeon's parable at lines 229–234.

72 Anastasius of Sinai, *Oratio in Psalmum VI* [*PG* 89: 1116A]): Ἠκούσαμεν ληστὴν σωθέντα δι' ἐξομολογήσεως ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ οὐρανίου βασιλέως, καὶ εἴδομεν λῃστὴν σωθέντα δι' ἐξομολογήσεως ἐπὶ τῆς σῆς βασιλείας.

73 The coming remarks on various *loci* in Symeon's works owe much to Krueger's discussion from 2006.

74 *Hymn* 24.74–75: γέγονα, οἴμοι, καὶ μοιχὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ / καὶ σοδομίτης ἔργῳ καὶ προαιρέσει.

75 *Hymn* 24.175–177: πῶς γὰρ δυναίμην σιωπῇ ὑποφέρειν / τὰ γινόμενα καθ' ὥραν, ὦ θεέ μου, / καὶ πραττόμενα ἐν ἐμοὶ τῷ ἀθλίῳ.

76 *Hymn* 24.76: γέγονα πόρνος, μάγος καὶ παιδοφθόρος.

77 What is rhetoric and what is reality when Symeon confesses to so much are difficult questions. See Krueger 2006: 116; Golitzin 1998: 26–27; Turner 1990: 27–29.

78 E.g. Turner 1990: 28–29.

79 *Oratio Ethica* 10.229–34: οὐδὲν γὰρ φορτικόν, οὐδὲν ἐπαχθὲς ὁ Δεσπότης ἡμῶν καὶ Θεὸς ἐνετείλατο, μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν ῥᾴδιά τε ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ εὔκολα, καθὰ—πιστεύσατέ μοι—καὶ αὐτὸς ἔγνων ἐγὼ εὔκολον εἶναι τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπίτευξιν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ. Ἀλλὰ διὰ παραδείγματος τοῦτο ὑμῖν ὑποδείξω. . .

80 *Oratio Ethica* 10.304–311: Τοιγαροῦν, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, πάντα ἀφέντες δράμωμεν γυμνοί, καὶ προσελθόντες τῷ δεσπότῃ Χριστῷ προσπέσωμεν καὶ προσκλαύσωμεν ἐνώπιον τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀγαθότητος, ἵνα καὶ αὐτός, θεασάμενος τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν ἡμῶν, ὁμοίως ἡμᾶς, μᾶλλον δὲ μειζόνως, ἀποδέξηται καὶ τιμήσῃ, καὶ στολῇ καὶ διαδήματι τῷ ἑαυτοῦ κατακοσμήσῃ καὶ ἀξίους τοῦ ἐπουρανίου νυμφῶνος δαιτυμόνας ἐργάσηται. Cf. *Oratio Ethica* 10.274–278, and Krueger 2006: 107. Note that Krueger and I see the nudity differently: for Krueger the nudity describes the casting off of desire, for me the nudity is revelation of desire.

81 Krueger 2006: 101.

82 Laiou 1992: 78.

83 Prefiguring this comment, Mullett 1988: 11 n.41, notes that possible sexual expression between men was not as weighty an issue as we now might imagine it was. Pitsakis 2008: 9, underscores the nonchalance in the sources about sex between men, while being uncertain whether this means that same-sex desire was thought unimportant or if there was wide-ranging tolerance that we, dealing with the weight of our history, can hardly understand now. Smythe 1999: 144, followed up Laiou's analysis, but then speaks of Byzantium as the 'first closet society', citing Sedgwick 1990. As the closet in Sedgwick's formulation is a structure of paranoid concealment with the possibility of catastrophic revelation, it does not suit this Byzantine evidence.

84 Laiou 1992: 68; Messis 2006: 779 n.170; Pitsakis 2008: 8.

85 Messis 2006: 781.

86 *Ekloge* 17.38: Οἱ ἀσελγεῖς, ὅ τε ποιῶν καὶ ὁ ὑπομένων, ξίφει τιμωρείσθωσαν· εἰ δὲ ὁ ὑπομένων ἥττων τῶν δώδεκα ἐτῶν εὑρεθῇ, συγχωρείσθω, ὡς τῆς ἡλικίας δηλούσης μὴ εἰδέναι αὐτόν, τί ὑπέμεινεν (ed. Burgmann 1983: 238).

87 Ὁ ἀσελγὴς ὅ τε ποιῶν καὶ ὁ ὑπομένων ξίφει τιμωρείσθω· ὁ δὲ ἥττων τῶν δεκαπέντε ἐτῶν τυπτέσθω καὶ μοναστηρίῳ εἰσαγέσθω, ὡς τῆς ἡλικίας δηλούσης τοῦτο ἀκουσίως πεπονθέναι αὐτόν (ed. Simon and Troianos 1977: 71).

88 Οἱ ἀσελγεῖς, ὅ τε ποιῶν καὶ ὁ πάσχων, ξίφει τιμωρείσθωσαν· εἰ μὴ ἄρα ὁ πεπονθὼς ἔλαττον ᾖ τῶν ιβ΄ χρόνων. τότε γὰρ τὸ ἐνδεὲς τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτοῦ τῆς τοιαύτης αὐτὸν ἐξαρπάζει ποινῆς (eds. Zepos and Zepos 1931: 365).
89 Οἱ ἀσελγεῖς, ὅ τε ποιῶν καὶ ὁ πάσχων, ξίφει τιμωρείσθωσαν, εἰ μὴ ἄρα ὁ πεπονθὼς ἔλαττον εἴη τῶν ιβ΄ χρόνων. τότε γὰρ τὸ ἐνδεὲς τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτοῦ τῆς τοιαύτης αὐτὸν ἀπαλλάττει ποινῆς. (Zepos and Zepos 1931: 225–226).
90 Troianos 1989: 35–37; Messis 2006: 776–778, 781.
91 See Joannou 1963: 147, and Rhalle and Potle 1854: 220, for Canon 62 (and Joannou 1963: 103–104, and Rhalle and Potle 1854: 110, for Canon 7, which gives the length of the penalty. Cf. Troianos 1989: 41; Messis 2006: 781–782.
92 Joannou 1963: 212–216; Rhalle and Potle 1854: 308–311. Cf. Troianos 1989: 42–43; Messis 2006: 782.
93 *PG* 99: 1728: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐάν ἀποστῇ τοῦ κακοῦ μετὰ πληροφορίας, διετῆ χρόνον ἀκοινώνητον (cf. Troianos 1989: 43; Messis 2006: 783).
94 *PG* 99: 1728: τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην ἐν τοῖς ἄρρεσιν.
95 *PG* 99: 1728: εἰ δὲ ἀμελῇ, τὰ δεκαπέντε ἔτη ἐκτελείτω τὸ ἐπιτίμιον.
96 Arranz 1993: 20–22, who assembled an edition that contains two of the three canons to be discussed presently, attributes the collection to John the Monk and suggests that it could be as late as the eleventh century but prefers the ninth or early tenth, cf. Troianos 1989: 43, who does not believe the sixth-century patriarch wrote these canons either.
97 Troianos 1989: 43.
98 Rhalle and Potle 1854: 441–442: Περὶ ἀρρενομανίας: Ὁ τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην ἐν ἄρρεσι διαπραξάμενος, τῷ μὲν γ΄. τοῦ Νύσσης Κανόνι ἔτη ιη΄. τῆς κοινωνίας ἐκβάλλεται· τῳ δε ξβ΄. του μεγαλου Βασιλειου ιε΄. Ἡμῖν δὲ τρία ἔτη τῆς κοινωνίας εἴργεσθαι τὸν τοιοῦτον ἔδοξε, κλαίοντα καὶ νηστεύοντα, καὶ πρὸς ἑσεπέραν ξηροφαγοῦντα, καὶ μετανοίας διακοσίας ποιοῦντα. Περὶ πλείονος δὲ τὴν ῥᾳστώνην ποιούμενος, τὰ ιε΄ ἔτη πληρούτω.
99 Arranz 1993: 72.2–8.
100 Arranz 1993: 72.9–12; elsewhere in these canons, and with possible inconsistency, sex against nature with a man (Arranz 1993: 68.10 and 14–15) nets simply a three-year penance with no qualification.
101 Messis 2006: 786; Arranz 1993: 70.8, 70.21–72.1.
102 Arranz 1993: 50.26–32.
103 Arranz 1993: 54.10–17: Περὶ ἀρσενοκοιτίας. Ἡ δὲ ἀρσενοκοιτία τρεῖς ἔχει τὰς διαφοράς. Ἄλλο γὰρ τὸ παθεῖν παρ' ἑτέρου· τόδε κουφότερον· ἢ διὰ τὴν ἀνηλικιότητα. ἢ διὰ πτωχείαν, ἢ διὰ βίαν, ἢ πολλὰς τὰς διαφοράς. Ἕτερον δὲ τὸ ποιῆσαι· ὃ καὶ βαρύτερον τοῦ παθεῖν. Τὸ δὲ παρ' ἄλλου παθεῖν καὶ ποιῆσαι εἰς ἕτερον· πάσης ἂν εἴη ἀπολογίας ἀλλότριον.
104 Morris 2016: 3, has the following to say about the impression the evolving attitudes of the medieval church can evoke: 'In terms of "gay sexuality," the historical practice of the [Eastern Orthodox] church is far from what many modern church members might expect it to have been'.
105 For the dating of the life, see Talbot 1996: 242–245.
106 See Rapp 2016: 220–222, for discussion of this life. I also thank her for drawing my attention to this work.
107 *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris* 30/704: προσφιλὴς . . . αὐτοῖς.
108 *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris* 30/704: Ἔσχε καὶ συνασκητὴν καὶ συνεργὸν ἁπάντων τῶν καλλίστων κατορθωμάτων Θεόδωρόν τινα . . . ἄνδρα γενναῖον τὰ στρατιωτικὰ καὶ ῥωμαλέον, γενναιότερον δὲ τοῖς κατὰ Θεὸν πολιτεύμασιν· ᾧ δὴ συζευχθείς, οἷα μόσχος εὐγενής τε καὶ ἰσχυρός, ὡς εἰς πίονα γῆν ἠροτρίων ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν τὰ σπέρματα ὡς ἄριστοι γεωργοὶ κατεβάλλοντο, οἳ κατὰ καιρὸν εὐφροσύνως ἐθέρισαν, καρποὺς ὡρίμους Θεῷ καὶ τοῖς θείοις ληνοῖς ἐναπέθεντο καὶ ἀγαλλίασιν αἰώνιον ἐκομίσαντο.

109 *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris* 31/704: κοιλιακῷ νοσήματι περιπίπτει.
110 *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris* 2/692: '᾽Επειδή,' φησιν, 'φίλτατέ μοι ἀνδρῶν, οὕτως ἐκ συνηθείας ἀλλήλοις συνεκράθημέν τε καὶ συνεδέθημεν, δίκαιον ἥγημαι τὸν δεσμὸν τοῦτον τῆς ἀγάπης βιαιότερον θεῖναι καὶ τελεώτερον καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀγχιστείας τούτῳ προσθεῖναι ἅμματα, ἵνα διπλῇ συνδεσμώμεθα, μετὰ τῆς συνηθείας προσλαβόντες καὶ τὴν συγγένειαν.'
111 For the record, it was not good for Maria to have this man for a husband. Violent, Nikephoros beat Maria so badly (9/696) that she died from her injuries (10/696).
112 Talbot 1996: 256 n.52; *LSJ* offer up the following in its entry for συνηθεία: 'sexual intercourse, X.Cyr.6.1.31 (v.l.); ἔχειν μετὰ γυναικός Plu.2.310e; πρὸς γυναῖκα Vett. Val.288.23'.
113 It strikes me that this life needs to take its place as a central text on modes of interpersonal connection in Byzantium. Men and women become connected in marriage and men become connected through marriage, even as their relations, one on one, feature emotional and corporeal intensity. The regrettable violence of Nikephoros is worth some thought too: is there something to be said about his possible primary connection to Bardas and a marriage that was an afterthought?
114 Stephenson 2003: 61.
115 There were marriages that built a man's authority within the empire, e.g. the marriage of Nikephoros II Phokas to Theophano, Romanos II's widow, is one. The second marriage of Michael II, to be discussed below, qualifies. John I Tzimiskes' marriage to the sister of Bardas Skleros, an important military commander who later revolted against Basil, provides still another example (Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 5.5, 6.11, 7.3; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, John I Tzimiskes, chap. 5). There also were marriages (or proposed marriages) of Byzantine notables to foreigners. Basil and his brother were betrothed to Bulgarian princesses (Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 5.3; Shepard 2003: 15; Tougher 2013: 307). In 1005–1006, Basil arranged the marriage of Maria Argyropoulina – sister of the later emperor, Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034) – to Giovanni Orseolo (the son of Peter II, Doge of Venice) for the purpose of alliance (Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, Basil II and Constantine VIII, chap. 25; Wortley 2010: 325 n.135). One need hardly mention Anna, Basil's sister, and her marriage to Vladimir of Kiev, or Theophano Skleraina's to Otto II (see for example Shepard 2003).
116 For discussion of the legislative background of marriage in Byzantine society, see Laiou 1992: 9–58, and Pitsakis 2000. For marriage among elite Byzantines, see Macrides 1992, Shepard 2003, Schreiner 1991, and, quite *ad rem* as general background to this chapter on Basil and his non-marriage, Tougher 2013. There also were moves toward having male members of the imperial house marrying foreign royalty in the tenth century. For example, Romanos II, Basil's father, was betrothed in 944 to Bertha, daughter of Hugh of Arles (Shepard 2003: 7). Basil II with some controversy married his sister Anna to Vladimir of Kiev: see discussion in Shepard 2003, and Tougher 2013. In any case the importance of marriage for the formation of connections that will enable familial flourishing, political power, and even alliances with foreign powers is clear enough from the histories of this time. Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion* positively coruscates with marriages: Nikephoros II Phokas, chap. 2; John I Tzimiskes, chaps. 5, 7, 8; Basil II and Constantine VIII, chaps. 2, 17, 24, 25, 44.
117 Treadgold 2013: 165, 179.
118 As suggested by Treadgold 2013: 176–179.
119 Theophanes Continuatus 2.24: 'οὐ γάρ ἐστιν οἷον ἄνευ γυναικός' φάσκειν 'βασιλέα τε ζῆν καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας στερεῖσθαι γαμετὰς δεσποίνης καὶ βασιλίδος'.
120 There is a further complexity to this story. The author, no friend to Michael, says that Michael wanted it to look like he loved his deceased wife so much that he had to be compelled to remarry: 'And so, when his wife had died and since he was wanting the

opinion of the many to believe that inconsolable grief for her held [him]. . .' (Theophanes Continuatus 2.24), τῆς γαμετῆς γοῦν τελευτησάσης αὐτοῦ, καὶ δόξαν θέλοντος κατασχεῖν τῶν πολλῶν ὡς πένθος ἄληστον ἔχει αὐτῆς. . .

121 Theophanes Continuatus 2.24.

122 For bibliography and discussion see Holmes 2005: 21–29, and Sifonas 1994: 118 n.1.

123 See Sifonas 1994, and Holmes 2005.

124 Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, sole reign of Constantine VII, chap. 7, reports that her name, prior to the assumption of the grand name Theophano, was Anastaso and that her background was not lofty; Wortley 2010: 232 n.32. It is possible that she was not as low as all that, see discussion in Garland 1999b: 126–127, 270 n.3. In any case, though, she was not as lofty as a Skleraina.

125 Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicon* 131.32 (ed. Wahlgren 2006: 248); Eudokia Ingerina was at first mistress to Michael III. Empress Theodora (his mother) and the logothete Theoktistos thought her unsuitable for Michael, making him marry Eudokia Dekapolitissa instead. Notably though, Eudokia's modest background and the unpromising beginning of her involvement in imperial circles did not stop her from becoming mother to the Macedonian dynasty.

126 Treadgold 1997: 519.

127 Schreiner 1991: 189, points out that in the ninth and tenth centuries beauty in an empress was often more important than lineage and, hence, alliance. Desire was, therefore, a possible consideration.

128 Both versions of Symeon the Logothete's *Chronicon* and the *Chronographia* of Pseudo-Symeon (all written in the mid-tenth century) speak of the intense desire Michael felt for Eudokia: Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicon* 131.32 (first version), ed. Wahlgren 2006: 248; *Chronicon* (second version), ed. Bekker 1838: 828.23, Istrin 1920: 11, Featherstone 1998: 427.25; Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia* 675.40.

129 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 2.10.

130 Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, Nikephoros II Phokas, chap. 22, notes that Nikephoros and Theophano had sexual relations (*synousia*). Zonaras 16.28 reports Nikephoros' strong sexual interest in Theophano: ἐρωτικῶς δὲ σφόδρα πρὶν διακείμενος. Cf. Garland 1999b: 271 n.36.

131 Psellos memorably relates the peaceable meeting Bardas Skleros and Basil had (*Chronographia* 1.28). Bardas Phokas died before he could have been forgiven by Basil (Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.16–17; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, Basil II and Constantine VIII, chap. 18) but it does not seem likely that he would have fared as well as Skleros did.

132 Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, Basil II and Constantine VIII, chap. 16: ὃν οὗτος φιλοφρόνως ἄγαν δεξάμενος καὶ περιχαρῶς μάγιστρόν τε εὐθέως ἐτίμησε καὶ συμβούλῳ διὰ παντὸς ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ἐχρῆτο . . . αὐτὸς δὲ τῆς ἐξ αὐτοῦ συμβουλῆς μονωθείς, καὶ φίλων δεόμενος καὶ συνεργῶν ἐν ταῖς περιστάσεσι, τότε γνησίως τὸν Ῥωμανὸν προσεδέξατο, ἄνδρα εἰδὼς ἐντρεχῆ καὶ δραστήριον καὶ τὰ πολεμικὰ ἱκανώτατον.

133 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.17.

134 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 10.9.

135 For more on Kalokyres Delphinas, see Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 216 n.87; Wortley 2010: 318 n.96.

136 Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, Basil II and Constantine VIII, chap. 17: ἐπὶ ξύλου κρεμᾷ.

137 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 10.9: ἀνεσκολόπισε.

138 Holmes 2005: 461–462; Svoronos 1994: 190–217.

139 See Sifonas 1994, and Holmes 2005.

140 Darrouzès 1966: 8. The secondary literature has discussions of the evidence of struggle in these orations: Darrouzès 1966: 8–13; McGuckin 1996: 27–31, and 2005: 186–187. See also Turner's biographical sketch (1990: 16–36). Turner 1990: 11, believes the orations to be addressed to persons in and outside of the monastic context: 'These, apparently written works from the outset, were addressed to a wider public than the monks of Symeon's monastery. . .'. Darrouzès 1966: 8, remarks that Symeon 'parle [in the *Orationes Ethicae*] en défenseur de la théologie mystique contre des adversaires indéterminés mais réels'.

141 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 59.

142 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 72.

143 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 75–77.

144 Turner 1990: 21; Krivochéine and Paramelle 1963: 250–251 n.1, and 381 n.1; indeed, Krivochéine (252) says: 'En général, quand il parle des « rois terrestres », c'est presque toujours sans sympathie, quelquefois avec ironie et hostilité'.

145 Precise dating of individual *Catecheses* is not possible. They were directions to his monks and they date from the time when he was hegoumenos of St. Mamas, i.e. 980–1005 (Krivochéine and Paramelle 1963: 165).

146 *Catecheses* 2.107–109: Ἄνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντες σχεδὸν τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ πτωχοὺς ὥσπερ ἀποβδελύσσονται καὶ βασιλεὺς ἐπίγειος τούτους ὁρᾶν οὐκ ἀνέχεται. . .

147 *Catecheses* 4.470–472: Ὥσπερ γὰρ βασιλεὺς δίχα τοῦ ὑπ' αὐτὸν στρατεύματος ἀσθενὴς καὶ εὐχείρωτος τοῖς πᾶσι γίνεται καὶ οὐδὲ βασιλεὺς φαίνεται. . .

148 *Catecheses* 5.573–580: Πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄνδρας βασιλεῖς τε καὶ ἄρχοντας ὁμοίως ἐρεῖ· 'Οὐκ ἠκούετε πῶς ὁ Δαυὶδ ἁμαρτήσας, καὶ εἰσελθόντος πρὸς αὐτὸν τοῦ προφήτου Ναθὰν καὶ ἐλέγξαντος αὐτὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ, οὐκ ἀντεῖπεν, οὐκ ὠργίσθη, οὐκ ἔκρυψε τὸ ἁμάρτημα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θρόνου ἐξαναστὰς προσέπεσεν ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ εἶπεν· "Ἡμάρτηκα τῷ Κυρίῳ μου!" καὶ οὐκ ἐπαύσατο ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς κλαίων ὁμοῦ καὶ θρηνῶν'.

149 The date of the *Capita Theologica* is late in the decade of the 1000s, or even later than that (Darrouzès and Neyrand 1996: 10).

150 *Capita Theologica* 2.8.10–11: πρὸς ὕψος πνευματικῆς θεωρίας . . . ἀνενεχθείς.

151 *Capita Theologica* 2.8.7–9: μοναχὸς ὁ ἀληθῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πραγμάτων ἀναχωρήσας.

152 *Capita Theologica* 2.8.13–16: βλέπει γὰρ ἀεὶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν περιλάμπουσαν αὐτόν, ἥτις ἔνδυμα καλεῖται καὶ βασίλειος ἁλουργίς, μᾶλλον δ' ὅπερ αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός, εἴπερ αὐτὸν οἱ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντες ἐπενδύονται.

153 *Capita Theologica* 2.8.1–7: Καθάπερ ὁ ἀπὸ πτωχείας ἐσχάτης ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πλοῦτον ἀνενεχθείς, καὶ περιφανὲς ἀξίωμα στολήν τε παρ' αὐτοῦ λαμπρὰν ἐνδυθεὶς καὶ πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἵστασθαι κελευσθείς, αὐτόν τε τὸν βασιλέα μετὰ πόθου ὁρᾷ καὶ ὡς εὐεργέτην ὑπεραγαπᾷ, τὴν στολήν τε ἣν ἐνεδύσατο τρανῶς κατανοεῖ καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα ἐπιγινώσκει καὶ τὸν δοθέντα αὐτῷ πλοῦτον ἐπίσταται. . .

154 The fact that neither position has exclusive rights to 'over-love' puts the question to the assertion of Krueger 2006: 115, that the asymmetries asserted for ancient sexuality are operative in Byzantium.

155 Space will not allow discussion, but this picture of a courtier raised up by imperial interest recalls what Beck 1965 has to say about *hetaireiai* (gangs, comradeships). He discusses evidence in the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, and in other later histories, of groups of young men of obscure origin who make their way into association with imperial power, or even to the throne itself. These men are chosen for membership in these *hetaireiai* on the basis of shared interests in, say, hunting or horsemanship, and good looks (and hence possible same-sex desire) could be a factor leading to successful entry into a *hetaireia* (Beck 1965: 10; 16). Indeed, Beck 1965: 29, remarks 'der Charakter dieser Hetairien ist nicht durchwegs politisch'. The rise of

emperor Basil I (867–886) is a prime example of this mode of advancement. He was both a member of a *hetaireia* and then patron of one just before the assassination of his predecessor Michael III (Beck 1965: 4–18). His abilities and looks played a part in his rise. A *hetaireia* from the beginning of the ninth century supported by Bardanes Tourkos that contained the future emperors Leo V (813–820) and Michael II (820–829) provides still another example (Beck 1965: 18–22). Beck 1965: 28, perhaps goes too far when he emphasizes the extra-constitutional nature of *hetaireiai*, as members of the *hetaireia* and the *hetraireiarch* had places in imperial ceremonial (Oikonomidès 1972: 35, 63). That said, though, the roles of the members of a *hetaireia* were *ad hoc*, and the tastes of the leader/sponsor determined membership. Beck 1965: 26–27, also speaks of a possible *hetaireia* associated with Basil II that included members of the Komnenos family (Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historia* 1.2.1–2: Ἐπεὶ δὲ διηλλαξάτην ἄμφω (*sc.* Isaac and John Komnenos) τὴν ἥβην, εὐθὺς ταῖς βασιλικαῖς ἑταιρείαις συγκατελεγέτην), and still other ones in the tenth century (Beck 1965: 23–26).

156 Hussey 1967: 183; Turner 1990; Morris 1995.

157 For connections between monks and men in the world, see Turner 1990: esp. 34, 55, 106, 119, 231, 234–241. Morris 1995 is dedicated to interactions between monks and laymen and is relevant frequently on this point. More specifically, Morris 1995: 76–80, delineates ways in which monks frequently were indistinguishable from their secular brothers in terms of education and family background. She also discusses a number of interactions between the secular and sacred milieux (Morris 1995: 84–87). Morris 1995: 106, sums up a dynamic that she documents repeatedly throughout her study, referring here to relations of spiritual fatherhood: ‘From members of the Byzantine administrative “middle management” as far up as the imperial families themselves, the clients [of the monks acting as spiritual fathers] represented a cross-section of the Byzantine ruling class. They consulted their spiritual fathers either in person or by letter, and it is very likely that they were well aware of others who also sought guidance from the same source’. Of interest too is the title of Symeon’s fourth hymn, which is called ‘A teaching to the monks who have recently left the world and to those who are still in the world’ (Διδασκαλία εἰς μοναχοὺς ἄρτι ἀποταξαμένους κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἐνκόσμῳ). He addresses monks and those who, not living in a monastery, desired guidance. Relevant too are the comments of Rapp 2016: 168–169, 192–193, 210, on relations between monks and laymen and the connections that Symeon maintained.

158 Niketas Stethatos, *Vita Symeonis* 100.

159 Turner 1990: 11.

160 Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses* 22.22–27; McGuckin 1996: 19–20.

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4

BYZANTINE EMPERORS AND SULTANS OF RŪM

Sharing power?*

Dimitri Korobeinikov

At the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century the Byzantine poet Manuel Philes wrote about one of the members of the imperial clan of the Palaiologoi. Most intriguing, however, was the fact that the hero of his verses was an émigré from 'Persia', which was a traditional designation of the Seljuk sultanate of Rūm in Byzantine sources. Our epitaph poem was one of three in the whole corpus of Philes focusing on a 'Persian' who left his homeland for Byzantium. All the people mentioned in the 'emigrant' poems were no native 'Persians', but rather persons closely connected with, or indeed related to, the imperial family of the Palaiologoi.[1] The hero of the poem, a certain Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos, was connected to the Seljuk royal dynasty. In this chapter I am going to study the poem's circumstances; to offer a translation of it; and to solve the riddle of Demetrios' family backgrounds: did the Palaiologoi and the Seljuks of Rūm have any matrimonial connections?

The poems have many hints and allusions, which make any positive identification dubious. This was not exceptional. Only after a detailed analysis could one have suggested that a Persian emigrant, mentioned in another poem, a chamberlain of the Great Seal (παρακοιμώμενος τῆς μεγάλης σφενδόνης) in Byzantium, was Constantine Doukas Nestongos, called *avunculo imperii nostri parachimumeno magnesfendonis domino Constantino Duca Nestingo* ('the maternal uncle, the chamberlain of the Great Seal of our empire') in the Byzantine–Venetian treaty of 15 June 1285.[2] He was an uncle of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) and most likely the youngest son of the rebel Andronikos Nestongos, the first cousin (πρωτεξάδελφος) of the emperor John III Vatatzes (1221–1254), who sometime in 1224/1225 escaped to the sultanate of Rūm, where he then lived and died.[3]

Our poem is no better. Despite the title, which stated that the verses described the fate of Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos, their background was highly enigmatic even for those who lived a generation or two after Philes. The text reads:

Bless me, what is that? Whose corpse is over there?
For I can really see he was a young man,
Although his image has no passion.
But I learned and [now] know everything [about him].
He was born by his noble mother,
Son of the three times blessed sultan,
Whom Persia brought to birth like a rose
Coloured with sultanic blood.
Displeased at the faith of his forefathers,
He eluded the thorns of his own kin.
He[4] was a well-built man [lit. 'giant'], curly-haired,
Whom the archer of death at once took away
By shooting him with the lethal arrow.
His blessed wife,
The Komnena-born Palaiologina,
Symbol of chastity [as pure as] turtle-dove's,
Never appeared to have tasted the second marriage;
Nature destined her to be a mother of two children
Of whom this one, alas, was the survivor, second-born,
The blossoming joyous delight of physical enjoyment,
The source of judgment, and force, and eloquence,
Whose mouth was as sweet as honey,
Even though it was gathered by the malice of death
That emits the smoke of burning horror.
And the beauty fades from the young man,
And froth now lay near his dry bones,
The source of many tears for anyone looking at him.
O man, what misfortune and calamity for the human being!
O cruel destiny! His happy life
Lasted no more than eighteen years.
So, when perceiving him though this image,
If need be, make your self more prudent.[5]

The young man's name was Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos. He appeared in the epitaphs of Manuel Philes as a nephew of the First (or Grand) Falconer (πρωτοϊερακάριος) Demetrios Palaiologos.[6] There were approximately six *protoierakarioi* known after 1254 (including Demetrios Palaiologos), who were heads of the corps of falconers. Though the *protoierakarioi* were in forty-eighth position in the lists of the Byzantine court ranks, nonetheless their office was of importance as it meant close contact with the emperor and his courtiers when hunting. Though the office of the imperial falconers was established before 1204 (there was a special *hierakarion* tax, mentioned in the *chrysobullos logos* of Isaac II Angelos in 1186[7]), nonetheless the office of the First (or Grand) Falconer seems to have been a Nicaean novelty.[8] Interestingly, the heads of the imperial falconers

were often persons of Turkic origin, emigrants from Rūm or those whose family names had some oriental traces. Though the first known *protoierakarios* (and also the Master of the Royal Hunt, ὁ πρωτοκυνηγός) of the thirteenth century was Theodore Mouzalon, the eldest of the Mouzalon brothers, favourites of emperor Theodore II Laskaris (1254–1258),[9] other *protoierakarioi* under Michael VIII (1259–1282) and Andronikos II were from the east:

1. Constantine Chadenos, the Imperial Marshal (κόμης τῶν βασιλικῶν ἱππῶν) from 1258, then *eparchos* of Constantinople, *megas logariastes* and *pansebastos sebastos*, whose family name suggests a Turkic pedigree.[10] From the lack of his ancestors' names in the prosopographical databases, it can be inferred that he was most probably a Turk recently converted to Christianity. An upstart and a confidant of Michael VIII, he was responsible for highly unpopular tax reforms in Asia Minor.[11]
2. A Basilikos, from the family of the Basilikai from Rhodes. Two Basilikai brothers were confidants of the sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II (1246–1256; 1257–1261) and became friends of Michael Palaiologos, the future emperor, during the latter's sojourn in Rūm in 1256–1257. They moved to Nicaea sometime in 1260–1261 and were appointed to the offices of chamberlain (παρακοιμώμενος τοῦ κοιτῶνος) and *megas hetaireiarches* respectively. It is not clear if the *protoierakarios* Basilikos (fl. from c. 1300) was identical to any of the Basilikai brothers (fl. 1256–1281).[12] He might have been their distant young relative, who had also come from Persia.[13]
3. Ibrāhīm-paşa (var. Ibrāhīm-beg, Ἀβράμπαξ πρωθιερακάριος), certainly a Turk, who on the orders of Andronikos II accompanied a rebel Seljuk prince Malik Masour in 1291–1293.[14]
4. Leo Bouzenos, who was also Master of the Royal Hunt and whose family name was undoubtedly Greek. His family, obviously from the Peloponnese or Lemnos,[15] was mentioned as 'famous' (τοῦ γένους ἕνεκα εὐκλείας). His later relatives were linked with the Angeloi.[16] His seal, however, was vaguely dated to the 'Palaiologan period' by Laurent; moreover, his given name and surname were separated *metri causa* in the seal's inscription, which led to a wrong suggestion that Leo and Bouzenos were two different persons, who owned one and the same seal.[17]

In this short prosopographical list, Demetrios Palaiologos, the maternal uncle of our Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos, may be compared with three 'oriental' *protoierakaioi* and just one Greek Grand Falconer under the first two Palaiologoi. After Andronikos II, however, the office of the *protoierakarios* lost its 'oriental' character. Its further holders belonged to the Byzantine nobility;[18] only one, a certain Iagoupes (Ἰαγούπης, from يعقوب , Yaʻqūb), mentioned in 1344, who was from a Hellenised Turkish family, seems to have been appointed according to the older tradition of hiring Turkic falconers.[19] The cases of Theodore Mouzalon and Leo Bouzenos, who united the offices of Grand Falconer and Master of the Royal Hunt, suggests that they

were the persons who, being so close to the sacred body of the emperor at the time of the dangerous sport, were responsible for both hunting and hawking;[20] it was no coincidence that they were Greeks. Hunting was so popular at the Byzantine court and army[21] that even the empresses attended it;[22] the numbers of royal hunters and falconers were so high that Theodore II once enrolled them to the military units in 1256.[23] I do not think that their numbers declined under the Palaiologoi. Emperor Andronikos III (1328–1341) was such a devoted hunter that the grumpy Gregoras accused him of overspending state revenues for hunting pleasures (the total expenses were estimated at 15,000 coins), which he called 'unworthy passion' (φαῦλα σπουδή).[24] There were at least four extant falconry treatises in Palaiologan Byzantium.[25]

With the possible exclusion of Chadenos, the Turkic *protoierakarioi* in our list seem to have been 'professional' falconers. Their importance lay in the prestige of royal hunting, so common in nomadic societies, where hawking was immensely popular.[26] There were no fewer than twenty-seven falconry treatises in Persian, usually called *Bāz-nāma*; their numbers could only be greater if one counts the Arab and Ottoman falconry books.[27]

The case of Ibrāhīm-paşa suggests that the *protoierakarios*, if need be, served as intermediary between the Byzantine court and the Seljuk sultans and their officials. The Grand Falconer Demetrios Palaiologos stood between the two groups: on the one hand, he belonged to the Byzantine nobility; and on the other, he was linked to the Seljuk royal dynasty.

The statement in Philes, that the father of Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was 'the three times blessed Sultan // whom Persia brought to birth like a rose // coloured with sultanic blood', strongly suggests that 'sultan' here was a title, but hardly a name or nickname. For such a nickname, if given in 'Persia' (that is to say the sultanate of Rūm), before he 'eluded the thorns of his own kin' and migrated to Byzantium, would have sounded dangerously peculiar, as an allusion to a dynastic plot, when applied to a member of the royal Seljuk family who was no real sultan. I know no Seljuk prince with such a sobriquet (*laqab*). His descendants in Byzantium, however, used the ancestor's title as a surname. Demetrios' mother, obviously a sister of the Grand Falconer, belonged to the families of the Palaiologoi and the Komnenoi.[28] Given the Turkic *milieu* of the *protoierakarioi* under Michael VIII and Andronikos II, the marriage between a Seljuk prince and a woman from the Byzantine imperial family, whose father the Grand Falconer maintained close contacts with the Turks because of his service, was quite predictable. What was less predictable was the fact of matrimonial links between the Christian Palaiologoi and the Muslim Seljuks of Rūm, which has so far received little, if any, attention in modern scholarship.

It is difficult to define the exact relationship between the emperor Andronikos II and his *protoierakarios*, but it seems that the Seljuk and the Komnenoi-Palaiologoi dynasties had become linked together by blood sometime in the thirteenth century. How did this come about?

We have first to answer the question about the Seljuk sultan, the father of Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos. The form 'Soultanos' per se was a surname derived from the title sultan, as the verses of Philes indeed testify. Another possible

way was the calque in Greek of the *laqab* (honorific nickname) al-Sulṭānī, 'the sultan's' or 'sultanic'. Persons with the *laqab* al-Sulṭānī were by no means sultans, but might have been of the high nobility outside the Seljuk royal clan.[29]

The Soultanoi family number no fewer than nine persons in the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*.[30] They belonged to the so-called second wave of Turkic nobility which appeared in Byzantium during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos. Turkic families (from Asia Minor and the Balkans) first appeared in Byzantium sometime in the middle of the eleventh century, and though these were few (according to Zhavoronkov, they comprised 63 persons out of 2,300, or 3 per cent of the total list of the Byzantine nobility), nonetheless their members often occupied the highest offices of the empire. However, the fall of Constantinople in 1204 to the participants of the Fourth Crusade was disastrous for the Turkic aristocratic families in Byzantine service. Only six of approximately twenty Turkic families (Kam(m)ytzai, Chalouphai, Kazanai, Isai, Maniakai and Mangaphades) survived after 1204 in the territory of the empire of Nicaea. But even these, with the exclusion of the Mangaphades and the Kazanai, did not manage to keep their high status, as most of the extant members of these six families were either lower officials or *paroikoi*. The new wave of the aristocratic Turkic families, among whom were the Soultanoi, came over during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos.[31]

The Soultanoi family were thought to have descended from the famous Seljuk sultan, ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II.[32] Kay-Kāwūs II was a friend of Michael VIII Palaiologos to whom he had given political asylum when Michael left Nicaea for Rūm in 1256. In 1261 the sultan, who was engaged in a prolonged conflict with his brother Rukn al-Dīn Kılıç Arslān IV (1248–1254, 1256–1265) and the Mongols, was forced to leave his realm for Nicaea.[33]

He did not go alone. The sources list his Christian mother, the famous Lady of Burdūliyya, i.e. Burdūl, the boundary fortress and land nearby near lake Burdur, which might have been her hereditary possession;[34] his two maternal uncles Kir Khāya and Kir Kedīd;[35] his wives[36] (of whom the most prominent was Kay-Kāwūs II's Christian wife[37]); a sister;[38] four sons[39] and a daughter.[40] The names of two sons of Kay-Kāwūs II were mentioned by Ibn Bibi, the chief Seljuk chronicler of the time. They were Ghiyāth al-Dīn Malik Masʿūd, the future sultan Masʿūd II (1284–1298; 1303–1307) and Rukn al-Dīn Kayūmarth.[41] Ibn Bibi also mentioned two other sons who remained permanently in Byzantium, but unfortunately he did not give their names.[42] The third son was baptised and received the Christian name Constantine, but retained his *laqab* '*malik*', 'prince': he was called ὁ Μελὴκ Κωνσταντῖνος in Pachymeres.[43] The name of the fourth son of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II remains an enigma.

The statements about the sultan, the 'rose of Persia', or Rūm, who renounced Islam and became Christian, most likely alluded to the exiled sultan Kay-Kāwūs II. Another likely candidate for the father of Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was Kay-Kāwūs II's son sultan Masʿūd II. However, the sequence of the events in Philes almost excludes the latter. For the father of our Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was born in Persia, there became sultan, then by converting to

Christianity 'eluded the thorns of his own kin', which alludes to his unsuccessful struggle with his own brother Rukn al-Dīn Kılıç Arslān IV. The fate of Masʿūd II was *vice versa* – he first turned Christian and only then became sultan. One cannot name him as the person, who 'eluded the thorns of his own kin' and lived peacefully, as he, a puppet in Mongol hands, constantly struggled with his cousin Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw III (1265–1284) and then with his nephew ʿAlā' al-Dīn Kay-Qubād III (1298–1303) for the shaky throne of Rūm. Even the circumstances of Masʿūd II's death are uncertain. Most likely, he was quietly strangled on the orders of the Īlkhān Öljeitü (1304–1316) in 1307/08 or 1310.[44]

The connections of Kay-Kāwūs II with Byzantium need to be explored in a little more detail.

> When ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II arrived at the empire of Nicaea in 1261, the Byzantine emperor (*malik al-Rūm*) came forth to meet him. With great honour and respect they gave a kingly place of residence to the sultan and his sons – Ghiyāth al-Dīn Masʿūd and other sons (*farzandān*).[45] They prepared suitable dwellings for each person of his retinue according to their rank and proximity [to the sultan]. And they arranged the provision of hospitality (*asbāb-i nuzul*)[46] and sustenance for them[47] according to the [hierarchical] place and position of each. In that kingdom the sultan freed himself from danger and settled at leisure.[48]

Pachymeres specified what was that leisure (or freedom, *farāghat*) that the sultan enjoyed in Nicaea and then in Constantinople. When the Sultan arrived,

> the emperor received him as if delighted, but [in reality] did not know what to do with him, save showing him every kindness and giving him assurances that at the moment when the sultan would want to return and take back his kingdom, he would support him. He allowed him to live in the customary manner of a Persian ruler (lit. 'according to his domestic habits of the ruler of Persia'). That is why the sultan sat beside the emperor on the imperial thrones (σέλμασι βασιλικοῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ παρηδρίαζε[49]) and had around himself intimidating bodyguards. He used [all] the insignia of power (τοῖς τῆς ἀρχῆς συμβόλοις) and put red-dyed shoes (ἐρυθροβαφὲς πέδιλον) on his feet.[50]

The sultan indeed enjoyed full freedom, being secretly watched on the orders of Michael VIII.[51] When ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II settled in Constantinople, which had just been liberated from the hated Latins in 1261, he lazily (βλακικῶς) spent his days 'in rioting and drunkenness' (here Pachymeres applied the Pauline expression κώμοις καὶ μέθαις from Rom 13:13 and Gal 5:21 to the Muslim sultan).[52] Kay-Kāwūs II, however, behaved as if he were a Christian. His friend was the patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos (1254–1259, 1261–1265), who ordered his servants to give the Holy Species (i.e. the Eucharist in both forms) to his sons; the sultan himself with his 'satraps' took part in the Paschal Matins procession with

the patriarch on Easter Sunday of 1264.[53] When on trial in the spring of 1265, Arsenios even exclaimed:

> I trust that I am guiltless in that I took the sultan and his sons for Christians, for it was the metropolitan of Pisidia who had witnessed [that they were baptised]. If it may be proved that they were not, the fault is his only, and by no means mine.[54]

The metropolitan Makarios of Pisidia was a close friend of the sultanic family, who escorted them during their flight from Konya to the empire of Nicaea in 1261; he also gave written evidence that he himself had baptised the sultan's children and that they received Holy Communion from him.[55]

After a protracted stay in Byzantium, Kay-Kāwūs II realised that his friend emperor Michael VIII would not help him to return to Konya. He stirred up a revolt at the end of 1264, after which he was imprisoned in the fortress of Ainos. Liberated by the attacks of the Golden Horde and the Bulgarians against Byzantine Balkan lands, ʿIzz al-Dīn left Byzantium for the city of Solkhat in the Crimea which was granted to him by Berke, khān of the Golden Horde, at the beginning of 1265. Two of his sons, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Masʿūd and Rukn al-Dīn Kayūmarth followed him, while two other sons, his uncle, wife, mother and daughter remained in Byzantium.[56] Even when outside Byzantium, he continued to act as a Christian. When in the Crimea, he heard about the trial and possible deposition of his friend patriarch Arsenios. He sent a mission to Michael VIII Palaiologos, demanding that he send to the patriarch the sultan's personal encolpium and, if the emperor wished, a salted pork leg, which he desired to eat.[57] The sultan's demarche, one which would have seemed absolutely impossible for a Muslim, did not save the patriarch who was nonetheless deposed.[58] However, the jury was unable to decide whether Kay-Kāwūs II and his sons were baptised, though the condemnation and following exile of the chief witness Makarios of Pisidia suggests that his written testimony to this effect was considered false.[59] Philes' statement that our sultan was 'displeased at the faith of his forefathers' perfectly described the situation. Being 'displeased' did not mean baptism.

Nikephoros Gregoras related a version of how the sultan was seen by the city-dwellers of Constantinople, which doubtlessly influenced Philes:

> The widely discussed accusation (ἡ λαληθεῖσα κατηγορία) was that the sultan Azatines was often present [at the church service] at the time when the Holy Doxology was performed[60] and that he conversed with the patriarch inside the church building. And indeed it was known to the emperor and the prelates that he was the son of Christian parents and had received divine baptism. He used the lucky turn of good fortune, as the latter often assists when there is no hope – and he became sultan and ruler of the Turks. Earlier he secretly observed the most essential [rules] of piety, now in Constantinople he openly venerated the divine icons and performed all the rites of the Christians.[61]

Noteworthy were the unprecedented privileges bestowed upon the sultan. When in the empire of Nicaea, he received the privilege of wearing red-dyed shoes – I know of no examples of Seljuk court ceremonial involving red-dyed shoes worn by the sultan; the personal symbols of sultanic power were a crown (*tāj*), a small turban (*dastārcha*, obviously as a part of the crown) and a seal-ring, or signet (*nigīn* or *angushtarī*).[62] Pachymeres makes an explicit statement: the red colour (κόκκινος, κοκκοβαφής, ἐρυθρός or ἐρυθροβαφής) was assigned solely to the emperor of the Romans. It was on these grounds that the emperor John II Grand Komnenos (1280–1284/85; 1285–1297) of Trebizond was compelled to change his imperial red shoes to those of the Despot, when he visited Constantinople in 1282. The only exception was the case of Constantine Palaiologos, called Porphyrogennetos, the 'purple-born' third son of Michael VIII, who received the privilege to wear imperial insignia without having been proclaimed a co-emperor for a brief period in 1280. The decision of Michael VIII placed his younger son in a position above the Despot's but below the emperor's. His attire included red-dyed shoes, as the shoes were mentioned among other articles of the imperial costume which he later had to change into that of the Despot.[63] So whereas the red-dyed shoes of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II might suggest that he was a co-emperor, as only crowned co-emperors had the right to wear red clothes on special occasions,[64] it is more likely that he received a rank similar to the one later bestowed upon Constantine Porphyrogennetos.[65] The rank of Kay-Kāwūs II was above the Despot's (with the latter's two-tone shoes of violet and white[66]) and just below the emperor's. Perhaps this rank was even higher than the one of the heir apparent Andronikos Palaiologos, the future emperor Andronikos II, who was just a child of three or four years old in 1261 and who was proclaimed, but not crowned, a co-emperor between 1262 and 1265 (his imperial coronation took place much later, on 8 November 1272).[67] From the ceremonial point of view, the presence of the sultan and his entourage during the Easter Matins in 1264 did not undermine the position of Michael VIII, who was in profound conflict with the patriarch. The sultan did not act in lieu of the emperor. According to the court protocol, the emperor attended the Easter Matins without the patriarch, whom he had to meet later on the same day at Vespers in the church of Hagia Sophia.[68]

The sultan's attire was most likely a combination of his 'Persian' costume (according to the 'domestic habits of the ruler of Persia') and the articles of the Byzantine emperor's dress. According to the codex Vatican BAV Barberini gr. 449 (IV 31), similar attire was attested in the dress of his son Melik Constantine, the founder of the Melikai family, who was clothed in blue (γεραναῖον) on the orders of the emperor and at the same time received the right to keep a big red stone on his diadem or hat, which he had enjoyed when in Persia. Big red stones were an element in the emperor's crown. The colour of the clothes of Constantine suggested that his court rank was that of *sebastokrator* or Caesar, the two dignitaries below the Despot's.[69] The data in Pachymeres and the Barberini codex fully coincide in that the sultan's son received the rank just below his father's.

Indeed, why should it be otherwise? The Byzantines had no problems in listing the arriving Seljuk Turks according to their own ranks in 1261[70] and the text of Akropolites offered correct translations of Seljuk titles into Byzantine ones.[71] Between 1216 and 1218 king Hugh I (1205–1218) of Cyprus wrote a letter to a certain *amīr al-umarā'* (amīr of the amīrs, ἀμήρας τῶν ἀμηράδων, *id est beylerbeyi*), the head of Ikonion (μέγας προκαθήμενος πόλεως Ἰκονίου, probably, the *subaşı* of Konya), who at the same time was the great *shiḥna* (or *shaḥna*) of Lycaonia (μέγας σαχνᾶς πάσης τῆς Λυκαόνων ἐπαρχίας) and the sultan's deputy-in-chief (πρωτοσύμβουλος τῆς σουλτανικῆς αὐλῆς, *nā'ib al-salṭana*).[72] The address, no doubt in accordance with Greek chancery practice, was a mixture of the Greek calques from Arabic[73] together with Byzantine 'translations' of Seljuk titles. The most striking example of the practice of correlating Byzantine and Seljuk court ranks was the colophon in the manuscript of the Menologion of Symeon Metaphrastes of the last quarter or end of the eleventh century, now in the Bodleian Library (MS Holkham Gr. 19). The colophon reads:

> The *beylerbeyi*, or the Turkish *sebastokrator*, [died] in March, 13 indiction, AM 6778 (= AD 1270) († πεκλάρπακης:- / ἤγ(ουν) σεβαστοκράτορ / τούρκικον:- / μηνὶ μαρτΐω ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) / ιγ´ :- ἔτους ͵ςψοη´ :-).[74]

Beylerbeyi was the highest military rank after the sultan himself. Two facts suggest that the Christian *beylerbeyi* in MS Holkham Gr. 19 was from the entourage of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II. First, from 1262 to 1276 the *beylerbeyi* in Rūm was Sharaf al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn al-Khaṭīr,[75] executed for high treason by the Mongols at the end of Rabīʿ II AH 675 (before 10 October 1276).[76] The date of his execution and his undoubtedly Muslim name exclude him from the list of possible candidates for the *beylerbeyi* in our colophon. Secondly, the indiction style employed in the colophon was that of the Byzantine imperial chancery and bore no traces of the Greek chancery of the sultanate. So it seems that there was an established practice of having Byzantine equivalents to Seljuk court titles.

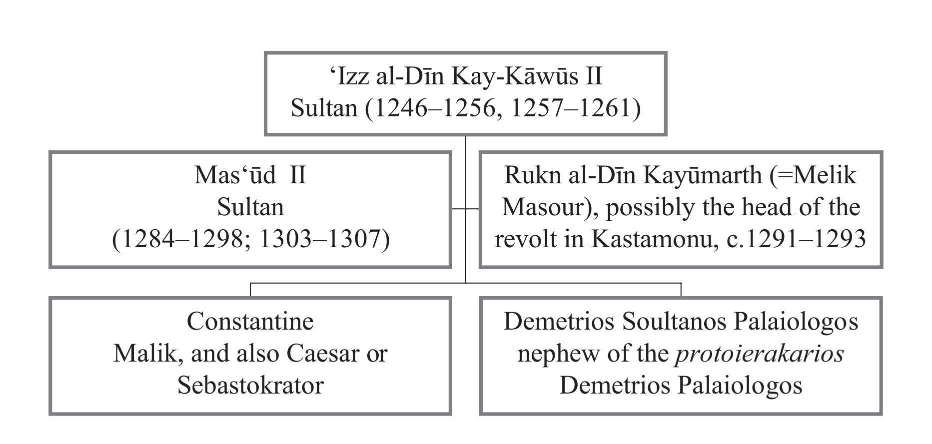
Relations between the Palaiologoi and the Seljuk royal dynasty did not break off after the quarrel between Michael VIII and Kay-Kāwūs II. Kay-Kāwūs II's elder son, Masʿūd II, became a co-Sultan and ruled over the eastern part of the sultanate (the province of Ermenek, Harput (Khartpert, Ḥiṣn Ziyād), Āmid (Diyarbakır), Malatya and Sivas) from 1281, while his cousin Kay-Khusraw III remained the chief sultan and the master of the western part until 1284.[77] According to Yazıcıoğlu Ali (who translated with important additions the work of Ibn Bibi into Ottoman for sultan Murad II (1421–1451)), sometime before 1284 Masʿūd II sent an embassy to the 'Fāsiliyūs Balālūghūs' ('the *basileus* Palaiologos', which meant Andronikos II), asking him about the whereabouts of his brothers still in Byzantium. Andronikos II replied that 'one of your brothers is with me, and another is in Karavīrya (Karaferia, Beroia).[78] and he has [the position of] the deputy (*mufawwaḍ*) in the province (*beylik*) of that country'. Yazıcıoğlu Ali continued:

> Fāsiliyūs gave one third of the tribute (*kharāj*), which he usually paid, to the *khān*s of the Tatars (i.e. the Īlkhāns), and sent another third to the sultan Masʿūd (II) and the last third to the sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn [Kay-Khusraw III] . . . At that moment the brother of the sultan Masʿūd, who was at the Takvar's,[79] wanted to escape with some other Turks. Fāsiliyūs learned of it, and then arrested and imprisoned him. At that time the patriarch, who is the Caliph of the Infidels, asked the Fāsiliyūs for the sultan's brother, took him, baptised him (*vaftīs edüp*) and made him a monk (*keşīş*). For some time he was in the service of the patriarch at the Hagia Sophia . . .

The additions of Yazıcıoğlu Ali are almost fictitious: he connected the story of Masʿūd II's younger brothers with the folk story of Ṣarū Ṣaltūq (Sarı Saltuk), the popular Muslim saint, who, according to Yazıcıoğlu Ali, had taken the sultan's brother from the patriarch and made him Muslim again. Later the Seljuk prince, now a dervish and a disciple of Ṣarū Ṣaltūq, received the latter's supernatural power. He was named Barāq ('long-haired dog') and sent to the city of Sulṭāniyya in Iran, where his disciples 'are still nowadays'.[80] It seems that the Ottomans remembered some pieces of historical truth: that the sons of Kay-Kāwūs II, who remained in Byzantium, were Christians, and that their elder brother Masʿūd II maintained contacts with Andronikos II, who supported him financially. However, we are on surer ground when we read in Pachymeres that between 1290 and 1293, during the great Turkish revolt in Kastamonu, a certain Melik Masour, who is thought to have been identical either to Masʿūd II[81] or one of his brothers,[82] visited Constantinople asking for a meeting with the emperor Andronikos II. Though he did not manage to meet the emperor and secretly returned to Kastamonu, he left his wife and a daughter as hostages. However, Pachymeres is strangely silent about the Christian beliefs of Masour and his wife. The circumstances of the proposed meeting between Andronikos II and Melik Masour suggest a Seljuk prince rather than the sultan Masʿūd II (who was at this time occupied with the struggle for Konya against the Turkmens and his own brother ʿAlā' al-Dīn Siyāwush[83]), as the rank of the person who met Melik and had to bring him to the emperor, was low: he was the chief falconer Ibrāhīm-paşa.[84] Moreover, if Melik Masour was indeed Masʿūd II, then we have to erase the latter from the list of those supposed to have been the father of our Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos. For the mother of Demetrios, the sultan's wife, who remained in Byzantium, had only a son (her first-born did not survive), whilst the wife of Melik Masour, who stayed for a while in Constantinople and then returned to her husband,[85] had a daughter. Our sources, Pachymeres and the Ottoman historical tradition, agree that the children of Kay-Kāwūs II maintained close contacts with Byzantium even after the death of their father. According to Pachymeres, Andronikos II had chances to proclaim Melik Constantine the governor of Karaferia/Beroia in 1281–1284 if we trust Yazıcıoğlu Ali, as the sultan of Rūm in 1306 or 1307. Instead, the emperor preferred to appoint Constantine governor in Pegai.[86]

How can one place the verses of Philes in this context? As already stated, the sequence of the events in Philes strongly suggest ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II as the father of Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos. His epithets in Philes are those of a sovereign. For example, the honorific 'the three times blessed' (τρισόλβιος), which he applies to the sultan of his verses, had strong Christian connotations[87] and also serves as a poetical form of the commoner term τρισμακάριστος[88] which was associated with the emperor, Despot or Caesar, or generally the imperial or dynastic royal power.[89] Likewise the statement that the sultan was 'brought to birth like a rose // coloured with sultanic blood' (ῥόδον σουλτανικοῖς αἵμασιν ἐγκεχρωσμένον) is a counterpart of the honorific 'the porphyry-gilded rose' (πορφύρας χρυσοῦν ῥόδον) applied to the Byzantine emperors, especially those of the Komnenoi dynasty in the twelfth century.[90] The only objection to this identification is that according to Ibn Bībī the ex-sultan Kay-Kāwūs II died in AH 677 (25 May 1278–13 May 1279)[91] or, less likely, AH 679 (3 May 1280–21 April 1281) because of fatal diseases, the *asqām-i muhlik wa amrāz-i murdī*, at the age of 44 or 46, but his death did not occur suddenly.[92] Why then did Philes write about 'the archer of death', who shot the arrow which ended the sultan's life? Though the archer in Byzantine poetry was a symbol of 'Persia' (sc. the sultanate of Rūm),[93] and being killed with the arrow seemed to have been an appropriate 'Persian' death, one can suggest that here Philes might have been alluding to Apollo, often called 'the Archer', ὁ τοξότης. Since Homer, and throughout the entire Byzantine period, Apollo was believed to have been spreading deadly diseases with his arrows.[94] The contrast between the mighty stature of the sultan, which he had inherited from his forefathers,[95] and his inglorious death in exile was stark enough to merit such an allusion.

If this interpretation is correct, Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was the enigmatic fourth son of Kay-Kāwūs II, who, like his brother Melik Constantine, remained in Constantinople. Strangely, scholars are united in agreeing that there were four sons but are not agreed on their identification.[96] The data of Pachymeres and the oriental primary sources in combination with the verses of Philes give us the list of Kay-Kāwūs II's sons in 1261:



We do not have correspondingly clear indications in relation to the numerous members of the Soultanoi family. The earliest evidence in Byzantine documentary sources was that of Athanasios Soultanos, the noble (εὐγενέστατος) husband of a certain Doukaina Angelina Komnena and father of Eudokia Doukaina Angelina Komnena, wife of the *skouterios* Theodore Sarantenos from 1279. According to the Vatopedi charters of 1324 and 1325, they had possessions near Beroia. If one trusts the charters' statements that Athanasios Soultanos kept his possessions for 80 years, then he should have appeared at Beroia in c. 1244/45, if not earlier, which excluded him from the list of the sons of Kay-Kāwūs II (who must have been just ten or eleven years old at that time).[97]

If Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was indeed a son of Kay-Kāwūs II, then the Christian wife of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II was the Komnena-born Palaiologina of Philes' verses. If so, the marriage should be dated to 1249, according to the Armenian historian Kirakos of Gandzak/Ganja, who wrote that Kay-Kāwūs II 'became son-in-law' (*p'esayats'eal*), or 'married [a daughter]' (*p'esayats'uts'eal*), of 'Laskaris, king of the Romans', i.e. became a relative by marriage of the emperor John III Vatatzes.[98] Given the fact of close matrimonial links between the dynasties of the Laskaris-Vatatzai and the Palaiologoi (Michael VIII himself called John III 'uncle', θεῖος),[99] the mistake of Kirakos was quite understandable. However, he correctly stressed the political importance of the marriage, which was a culmination of 'father–son' relations between the emperors of Byzantium and the sultans of Rūm, established in 1161–1162 when the emperor Manuel I Komnenos compelled the recalcitrant sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn Kılıç Arslān II (1156–1192) to become the imperial spiritual 'son' and to accept symbolically the suzerainty of Byzantium by making a *proskynesis* before Manuel I and then sitting on a lower and humbler chair beside the emperor's during the *anabathra* ceremony.[100] When describing the reception of Kay-Kāwūs II in 1261, Pachymeres used the same wording: he employed the word τὸ σέλμα (in plural), 'scaffold, dais; seat, throne', a poetical substitution for the more prosaic ἡ καθέδρα, mentioned by Kinnamos in relation to the *anabathra* of Manuel I and Kılıç Arslān II.[101] The fact that like Kılıç Arslān II, Kay-Kāwūs II sat beside the emperor on a separate throne during the *anabathra*, suggested that he was at least the 'spiritual son' of Michael VIII. However, his imperial insignia, the more splendid position of his throne surrounded by his own guards, and his general position above other Despots, including those of the imperial family (and also the emperors of Bulgaria and the unlucky emperor of Trebizond), suggested that he was considered a real member of the Palaiologan dynasty.[102] The data in Philes and Kirakos of Gandzak further confirm this. The *protoierakarios* Demetrios Palaiologos, the sultan's brother-in-law, had all the means to learn the art of falconry at the Seljuk court.

Other peripheral evidence to support this chronology exists. According to Simon de Saint-Quentin, Kay-Kāwūs II was eleven years old in 1245.[103] His marriage to the 'daughter' of John III took place when he was fifteen in 1249; his wife must have been of an even younger age. Both were in their late twenties in

Constantinople in 1261–1264. If the sultan died in 1278 (and, it seems, before the death of his son Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos), then Demetrios, who lived only eighteen years, was born in c. 1260. He was separated from his father when he was just four or five years old.

The matrimonial connection between the Palaiologoi and the Seljuks of Rūm caused a change in the style of Greek inscriptions in the sultanate. Before Masʿūd II, the *rūmī*, or the Greeks in Asia Minor under Seljuk rule, usually mentioned only Byzantine emperors as secular protectors for their churches. We read in the dedicatory inscription in Karşı Kilise, Gülşehir, in Cappadocia, then certainly in Seljuk territory, that the church was constructed or renovated 'under the reign of the [emperor] Theodore I Laskaris, in the year AM 6720, in the fifteenth indiction, April 25',[104] i.e. 25 April 1212. This means that the Greek population in Cappadocia, whilst under the authority of the Seljuk sultan, nevertheless recognised the Byzantine emperor as their chief suzerain. Under Masʿūd II and Andronikos II, however, both the sultan and the emperor were commemorated, as was the case in the inscription of the church of St. George of Beliserama, also made in Cappadocia between 1284 and 1295: '[during the reign] of the most high, the most noble great sultan Mas'ūd, when the lord Andronikos II [reigned] over the Romans'.[105] There have been various attempts to explain the mention of both emperor and sultan (for example that the sultan allowed the building of churches) but none has proved satisfactory. We now know that they had been relatives by marriage since 1249.

If we turn to the Arab inscriptions of Kay-Kāwūs II and Masʿūd II, we observe no changes in comparison with the inscriptions of their illustrious predecessors. There, the image of the Seljuk sultans was at variance with the one in Greek inscriptions. Kay-Kāwūs II, for example, was styled on the walls of Sahib Ata Camii in Konya in 1258 as 'the glorious sultan, master of the necks of the nations, the lord (*sayyid*) of the sultans of the Arabs and the non-Arabs (*al-'ajam*), ʿIzz al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Abū al-Fatḥ Kay-Kāwūs ibn Kay-Khusraw'.[106] His son Masʿūd II who had just become a co-sultan in 1281, was appropriately mentioned in the inscription in sultan Alâattin Camii in Uluborlu as 'the greatest sultan, the shadow of Allah in the world, Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn Kay-Kāwūs'.[107] However, the diplomatic protocol revealed a more rigid adherence to procedure. At none of the meetings between emperor and sultan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did the emperor take a lower place. On the contrary, it was the sultan who had to kneel and sit on a lower chair beside the emperor. For example, when Kılıç Arslān I (1092–1107) became sultan, he received the robes of honour, the flag, the drum and the letter of investiture from the Caliph.[108] However, his son sultan Shāhānshāh (1109–1116), when meeting Alexios I Komnenos in 1116, customarily made a *proskynesis* before the emperor (according to Zonaras);[109] and, according to Anna Komnena, he dismounted before Alexios I and kissed the emperor's foot.[110] Another of Kılıç Arslān I's sons, sultan Masʿūd I (1116–1155), was the first Seljuk sultan of Rūm who visited Constantinople where he met emperor John II Komnenos in 1124.[111] The reception was hardly the meeting of

two sovereigns of equal rank: it was the sultan, not the emperor, who appealed for help. Likewise Kılıç Arslān II's son sultan Kay-Khusraw I went through the same ritual as Kılıç Arslān II in 1161–1162, when he was in Constantinople as an émigré in 1200. How can this diplomatic practice be reconciled with Seljuk political ideology which can ultimately be reduced, it is generally thought, to the idea of 'defending the frontiers of Islam and waging *jihād* against the Byzantines'?[112]

One explanation was advanced by Shukurov: it was 'Harem Christianity', the practice of marrying Greek women which, together with the general Christian influence in the sultanate, led to the dual Christian-Muslim identity of at least three sultans: Kay-Khusraw I, Kay-Kāwūs II and Masʿūd II:

> Dual identity supposes that one of the two identities is in active mode while the other is in deferred mode. When in a Christian environment, such persons would identify themselves as Christian, deferring their Muslim identity. They would, however, embrace their Muslim identity when in a Muslim space, in turn deferring their Christian self for the time being. Such a paradigm has little to do with religious and cultural tolerance in the proper sense because tolerance means an ability to tolerate others, while the sultans bore both religions and both cultures in their selves.[113]

The strange combination of Christian and Islamic beliefs, understood in the categories of the 'dual identity', actually suggested a split personality. As such, it can be seen in behaviour of many Seljuk sultans of Rūm, from Kılıç Arslān I until Masʿūd II. Not all of them had Christian mothers. None the less, they, regardless of their personal feelings, agreed to prostrate themselves when meeting in person a Byzantine emperor, as if they were Christian rulers of a lower rank. This suggests that the 'dual identity' of an individual was in reality an institutionalised phenomenon at the Seljuk court. The difference between Islam and Christianity is too large to allow interpretation of the sultans' behaviour even in the categories of a situative identity, if one wants to avoid the notion of 'dual identity' and its deferred manifestations. In this respect, the case of Kay-Kāwūs II is noteworthy. The Byzantines publicly tried the beliefs of the sultan. The trial of patriarch Arsenios showed that his identity, if we are to 'translate' Pachymeres into the language of modern psychology, was a coherent, whole self, which was Muslim. His 'Christian' behaviour was described by Pachymeres almost entirely in relation to his connections at the Byzantine court, his friendship with the Byzantine courtiers (including the patriarch), and his special relations with the emperor. He nowhere explicitly stated that the sultan was Christian. In other words, the misleading term 'identity' should be avoided. Instead, one has to speak about the public self-representation of the sultans of Rūm.

Harem Christianity did not go beyond the private sphere, which is why so few traces of any public activity of the harem members had survived. For example, Māhperī Khātūn, mother of Kay-Khusraw II (1237–1245), was a Greek

(*rūmiyya*), according to a chronicle of the fourteenth century.[114] Nonetheless she nowhere revealed her Greek identity. No traces of her Greek past, or even a Greek name, or nickname, can be found in the court chronicles or inscriptions of the thirteenth century. She styled herself on the walls of the mosque of the Khuwānd Khātūn complex in Kayseri, which she had built, as a 'great queen, the wise, the ascetic, Ṣafwat al-dunyā wa al-dīn', mother of the sultan.[115] All components of her inscription, as well as the religious affiliation of her pious foundations, are Muslim. Similarly, it was the extremely secretive character of the baptism of Kay-Kāwūs II (which was considered to have been invalid at the trial of patriarch Arsenios) and his sons which Michael VIII was able to use in so masterly a way to overthrow the accused patriarch. Another suggestion was advanced by Beihammer, namely that

> the gradual elevation of fugitive Seljuk sultans seeking the emperor's protection, who from the Comnenian court title of *sebastos* successively ascended to the status of the emperor's 'spiritual son' and 'godchild,' eventually resulted in a remarkable synthesis of Byzantine and Seljuk-Muslim ideas of lordship.[116]

What were those Seljuk-Muslim ideas of lordship? The very symbols of the sultan's power, as well as ideas implicit in Seljuk Islamic inscriptions, differed from their Byzantine equivalents. As the emperor was the highest ranking sovereign of Christendom, so the sultan was the highest title which any Muslim sovereign could ever have dreamt of obtaining. How did the Seljuk sultans of Rūm, who, at least in theory, had no secular ruler above them, manage to justify in front of their retainers their obedience to the emperors of Byzantium? What political profit could a Seljuk potentate have earned when prostrating himself in the imperial palace in Constantinople and declaring himself 'spiritual son' of the emperor? It is true that the sultanate was never listed among the mightiest Islamic states, save perhaps in the brief period between the 1220s and the 1240s, and, as Andrew Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız have correctly stated, 'the panegyric poets, who so lavishly praise the Ayyubids, Mamliks and Great Seljuks of Iran are largely silent on the rulers of Anatolia'.[117] Traditional Muslim political theory denied the possibility of equal relations between a Christian and a Muslim state, all the more the subjugation of a Muslim state by a Christian one. Were there some initial peculiar features in the Seljuk-Muslim ideas of lordship that allowed the sultans to take part, perhaps half-heartedly,[118] in the public spectacle, which witnessed the superiority of the emperor of Byzantium? The study of Beihammer, however excellent, offers no answers.

Besides, there was considerable complexity in the primary sources of the time which somehow undermines the conclusions of Shukurov and Beihammer. The 'Christian' behaviour of the sultans, the titles conferred on them by the Byzantine emperors, were recorded almost exclusively in the Christian primary sources – Byzantine, Latin, Armenian, or Syriac. The Muslim sources are quite

predictably silent about this. Only an intricate analysis of just one case in Ibn Bibi shows possible traces of father-son relations between emperor Alexios III Angelos and sultan Kay-Khusraw I c. 1200, disguised under the terms of the traditional Islamic concept of *dār al-ʿahd* which denoted the lands that pass into the hands of the Muslims by agreement and which in this case suggested Byzantium, and its potentate, being a subordinate of the sultanate.[119] However, it was only too natural for a Christian chronicler to interpret the elements of the public representation of the sultans, which symbolised their power not only over a Muslim community, but also a Christian one, as signs of their alleged 'Christianity'. Such data cannot be taken at face value unless supported by other evidence. From this point of view, the case of Kay-Kāwūs II is illustrative. Despite the sultan's eccentric behaviour, Pachymeres casts doubts on his intention to claim to be a Christian. Indeed, even the episode of the sultan's personal encolpium and the salted pork leg, which he 'desired to eat',[120] can be interpreted as elements of his Muslim, not Christian, identity. The cases of veneration of Christian sacred objects in Muslim popular beliefs are known;[121] as to the pork leg, can one interpret this as a behaviour of a Muslim, perhaps a Sufi, who was determined to save his Christian friend from danger? The text of Pachymeres does *not* suggest that the sultan actually *ate* pork.

It seems that there was something 'Christian' in the self-representation of the sultans of Rūm which cannot be entirely understood in the terms of dichotomy between Islam and Christianity, including the enigmatic Harem Christianity. Pachymeres ironically hinted at the supposed Christian beliefs and private life of Kay-Kāwūs II, but he carefully described the public appearance of the latter as a member of the imperial family. For these reasons, I should like to advance a third suggestion, which partially avoids confessional background and instead focuses on dynastic connections. The Seljuk inscriptions and colophons, both Greek and Arabic, have one thing in common – the clearly expressed idea of loyalty to the ruling dynasty, not just the Seljuk polity, as the backbone of the sultan's power.[122] This dynastic approach, which was by no means Byzantine or influenced by Byzantium, was based on traditional Seljuk values. It helped unite the heterogeneous ethnic elements of the Seljuk realm. Given the fact of a numerous Greek population and the presence of Byzantine aristocracy at the Seljuk court (Komnenoi, Mavrozomai, Gabrades, Basilikai, Tornikioi, Nestongoi, Palaiologoi and Bardakhlades[123]), the political union with Byzantium might have been more than profitable for the sultans as Byzantine ethnic groups, political culture and transformed Byzantine institutions played a pivotal role in running the sultanate. It was the double identity of Greek subjects, rather than of the sultans themselves, that gave rise to the political flexibility of the sultans of Rūm. Hence the importance of the 'Christian' self-presentation of the sultans. When the anonymous abridger of the chief Seljuk chronicler Ibn Bibi, who wrote in the 1280s, described the circumstances of the exiled sultan Kay-Khusraw I in Constantinople in 1200, he used the term 'partnership' (or 'fellowship': *mushārakat*), when mentioning the relations between

Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) and his friend the sultan though he understood these in the terms of the classical Muslim theory of the service of the ruler of the infidels to his Muslim sovereign.[124] Conversely, the *mushārakat* was equally to be found on Seljuk territory from 1200 and afterwards. The same partnership can be attested between Michael VIII and Kay-Kāwūs II, his in-law, in 1261–1264, this time in the Byzantine territory when the empire faced the mass migration of Seljuk Turks because of the Mongol onslaught.[125] When Philes applied the epithet τρισόλβιος ('the three times blessed'), more appropriate for a Christian emperor, to the Seljuk sultan, it was not a metaphor. It was the harsh political reality.

Notes

* The paper would have been impossible without the help of many people. I wish to express my sincerest thanks to Dr. Michael E. Martin (University of Birmingham, UK) and Professor Patrick Nold (University at Albany, SUNY) for reading the draft and offering valuable suggestions on both the content and the style. I am also indebted to Prof. Timothy May (University of North Georgia), Prof. Roman Kovalev (The College of New Jersey), Kutluay Erk (Ege University, Turkey) and Sukhbaatarin Uuganbayar (Monsudar Publishing LLC, Mongolia) for their valuable suggestions on the literature concerning falconry in Turkic and Mongol societies. Any errors that remain are of course my own.

1 Manuel Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 1, poem 180: 87–88, and vol. 2, poem 242: 260–263; ed. Martini 1900, poem 56: 71–73.

2 Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 2: 261–262, ll.21–60; *PLP* 20201; Tafel and Thomas 1856–57, vol. 3: 339; Polemis 1968: 151–152, n. 132; Janin 1969: 477; Korobeinikov 2011.

3 George Akropolites, *History* 23, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth 1978, vol. 1: 36.18–37; trans. Macrides 2007: 169–171; trans. Zhavoronkov 2005: 64; Angold 1975: 40–41.

4 Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos' father.

5 Philes, ed. Martini 1900, poem 56: 71–73.

6 Philes, ed. Martini 1900, poems 55 and 56: 69–70, ll. 1–32; 71–73, ll.1–32. *Protoierakarios* ('Oberfalkner') literally meant 'first falconer'.

7 *Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς Μονῆς Πάτμου*, ed. Branouse and Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1980, vol. 1: 100, l.19.

8 Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux 1976: 138, l.29, 162, ll.25–32, 163, l.7, 184, ll.10–13; trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 30–31, 64–65, 106–107, 303–306, 387–388, 466; Poliakovskaia 2011: 234–244, 300.

9 George Pachymeres, *History*, ed. Failler and trans. Failler and Laurent 1984–2000, vol. 1: 40, n. 6; 41, ll.6–15; Nikephoros Gregoras, *Roman History*, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 66, l.2; Akropolites 75, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth 1978, vol. 1: 155.16–156, trans. Macrides 2007: 339, 342–343, and trans. Zhavoronkov 2005: 123–124, 283–284; Shukurov 2006: 224, n. 64.

10 *PLP* 30346; Miklosich and Müller 1860–90, vol. 4: 285. The family name Χαδηνός could have been derived from χανδάνω (Aorist ἔχᾰδον) ('to take in, hold, comprise'). However, the *χαδηνός or any close form thereof is absent from any Ancient or Modern Greek dictionary, cf. Demetrakos 1953–58, vol. 15: 7757–7758, 7785; Andriotes 1967: 418 (lemma χάδι). Far more secure is the suggestion that his family name was made from the Arabic *khadīn* (خدين 'intimate friend, companion, confidant'), which was also attested as *hadîn* in Ottoman Turkish: Devellioğlu 2000: 309.

11 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 31, 47–53; Korobeinikov 2014: 237–243. On the other Chadenoi, see *PLP* 30347.
12 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 181.22–183.19, 575.7–20, 615.5–21; *PLP* 2452, 2458. Cf. a different view: Shukurov 2014: 46, n. 79; Shukurov 2012: 24, n. 79.
13 Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 1 : 87–88; *PLP* 2454.
14 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 361.11; Zachariadou 1978: 267; *PLP* 61; Beldiceanu-Steinherr 2000; Korobeinikov 2004; Shukurov 2014: 46; Shukurov 2012: 24.
15 Cf. ἡ βουζία, *Sambucus ebulus*, 'elderberry': Trapp 1994–2017: 289. There was also a location Bouzes (Βούζης) in Lemnos, mentioned in 1285: *Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς Μονῆς Πάτμου*, ed. Branouse and Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1980, vol. 2: 74.10, 218–219. On the possible Peloponnesian origins of the Bouzenoi, see Rein 1915–16: 75–76.
16 Rein 1915–16: 75–76; *PLP* 3015, 3017.
17 I follow Laurent 1932: 168–169, and Gouilland 1951: 189–195 (repr. 1967, vol. 1: 600–603). The incorrect reading of the seal's inscription can be found in: *PLP* 3016, 14807, cf. *PLP* 3015; Shukurov 2006: 224, n. 64.
18 *PLP* 23606, 24896, 26952, 27123, 92402.
19 *Acts of Docheiariou*, ed. Oikonomidès 1984: 170.9–10; *PLP* 92055; Shukurov 2006: 209, 217, 224–225.
20 On the ceremonial importance of the hunt at the late Byzantine court, see Poliakovskaia 2011: 243; Poliakovskaia 1991: 577–578. For the earlier periods, see: Patlagean 1992; Ševčenko 2002: 69–70.
21 Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 114.10–20.
22 Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 44.7–12.
23 Akropolites 61, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth 1978, vol. 1: 124.25–125.8, trans. Macrides 2007: 300–301, and trans. Zhavoronkov 2005: 107.
24 Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 566.3–12; cf. Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 284.8–10, 315.14–18, 321.7–15.
25 Demetrios Pepagomenos, Περὶ τῆς τῶν ἱεράκων ἀνατροφῆς καὶ θεραπείας, ed. Hercher 1866: 335–516; *Orneosophium I*, ed. Hercher 1866: 519–573; *Orneosophium II*, ed. Hercher 1866: 577–584; Ἱερακοσόφιν [sic!], in Hammer-Purgstall 1840: 81–85; Hunger 1978, vol. 2: 268–269.
26 Allsen 2006: 58–70; Aydın 2013; Esin 1976; Esin 1978; Erdenebat 2014.
27 Dāneshpazhūh 1982–. The Greek-Persian-Arabic-Armenian falconry terminology can be found in Golden 2000: 186–187, 230.
28 Philes, ed. Martini 1900: 72.15.
29 Such *laqab*s were attested in the Seljuk inscriptions in Asia Minor: cf. the inscription in Tokat on the *türbe* (mausoleum) and *medrese* of Ḥājī Chīqarīq (Hacı Çıkarık), dated AH 578 (1182). The *türbe* and *medrese* were constructed on the orders of a certain *atābey* (*atābeg*) Badr al-Dīn Abū Manṣūr Shāhanshāh ibn Arslāntoghmush al-Sulṭānī: see Combe, Sauvaget and Wiet 1931–64, vol. 9, 3376–3377: 120–121; İsmail Hakkı (Uzunçarşılı) 1927: 62–63.
30 *PLP* 26333–26341.
31 Zhavoronkov 2006b: 163–166, 168–169.
32 Zachariadou 1964–65; Zhavoronkov 2006b: 168–74; cf. Shukurov 2014: 47: 'some of the numerous Byzantine aristocrats, who bore the patronymic Σουλτάνος in the late 13th–15th centuries, were very likely descendants of one of the relatives of Kaykāwus accompanying him in his exile'; cf. Shukurov 2012: 25; Shukurov 2008: 110–116.
33 Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 294–298, esp. 296–297; trans. Duda 1959: 280–285; İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 631–640; Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 765–774;

Yazıcızâde Ali, MS Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Revan Bölümünde 1391, ed. Bakır 2014, fols. 371b–376b (hereafter MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391); *Tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq dar Ānāṭūlī*, ed. Jalālī 1999: 99; *Anadolu Selçukluları Devleti Tarihi III*, ed. Uzluk 1952: 54; Aksaraylı Mehmed oğlu Kerîmüddin Mahmud, *Müsâmeret ül-ahbâr. Moğollar zamanında Türkiye Selçukluları Tarihi*, ed. Turan 1944: 68–70; Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-Fikra fī ta'rīkh al-Hijra*, ed. Richards 1998: 72–73; Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 183.20–185.21, vol. 2: 671.21–673.22; Failler 1980: 54–55; Cahen 2001: 189–191. On the alternative date of Kay-Kāwūs II's flight to Nicaea (summer of 1262, on the basis of the evidence of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Khuwayṭir 1976: 125–129), see Shukurov 2012: 7–13; Shukurov 2014: 40–41; cf. a critical approach to Shukurov's views: Korobeinikov 2014: 203, n. 233.

34 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 183.23, 303.17, 313.13; İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 637, 639, Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 298, trans. Duda 1959: 284–285, 342 and n. 372; Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 771, 774, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fols. 374b–375a, 376a.

35 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 301.13–20, 303.6,19; İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 638–639, Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 297, trans. Duda 1959: 284; Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 773, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fol. 375b; Baybars, ed. Richards 1998: 73.

36 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 183.23, 185.3, 13, 303.17.

37 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 313.13; Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 101.15.

38 İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 639, Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 298; trans. Duda 1959: 285; Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 183.24, 303.17, 313.14.

39 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 337.14, 339.9, and vol. 2: 359.13–363.4, 673.23–675.14; İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 639; Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 298; trans. Duda 1959: 285, 343, n. 375; Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 773–774, 855, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fols. 375b–376a, 415a–b; Gregorios Bar ʿEbrāyā (Gregorius Barhebræus), *Ktābā d-maktbānut zabnē*, ed. Bedjan 1890: 518, and ed. trans. Budge 1932, vol. 1: 442.

40 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 313.13. On Kay-Kāwūs II's family in Byzantium, see: Zhavoronkov 2006b: 168–169; Shukurov 2011: 180–90; Shukurov 2008: 90–111; Turan 2010: 511–515; Cahen 2001: 189–191.

41 İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 639; cf. Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 359.13–363.4, 673.23–675.14; Aksarayi, ed. Turan 1944: 70.

42 İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 639.

43 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 675.2; *PLP* 17762.

44 Cahen 2001: 212, 225; Turan 2010: 658–659.

45 *Farzandān* can be translated as 'sons' or 'children'.

46 *Nuzul*, like its alternative reading *nuzl*, means 'anything provided for a guest' (in Arabic *nuzl* is the 'food served for a guest', and *nazl* (plur. *nuzul*) is 'quarters, lodging; hotel, inn'). All other meanings ('increase, enlargement of food when dressed', 'abundance of agricultural produce', 'a gift', 'a mansion or hospitable dwelling') were derivations of the basic one. Steingass 2010: 1397.

47 Literally 'what is necessary for them', *mā-yaḥtāj-i ishān*.

48 Aksarayi, ed. Turan 1944: 70. Cf. Shukurov 2014: 46.

49 On the rare verb παρεδριάζω, see Trapp 1994–2017: 1230, s.v.

50 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 185.4–9.

51 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 185.10–21.

52 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 235.5–10.

53 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 337.13–20.

54 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 339.9–12.
55 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 185.3; Arsenios, *Testamentum*, ed. *PG* 140: col. 956.
56 Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 298, 335, trans. Duda 1959: 285, 323 (e); Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 300–313; Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 99–101; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Khuwayṭir 1976: 202–203, 214–218; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il al-Mufaḍḍal, *al-Nahj al-sadīd wa al-durr al-farīd fī mā baʿd tārīkh Ibn al-ʿAmīd*, ed. and trans. Blochet 1919–29, vol. 1: 452–457; Tiesenhausen 1884, 1941, vol. 1: 52–54, 178–180, 200 (62–64, 189–192, 203 of the Russian translation).
57 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 347.9–15.
58 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 329–355; Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 93.24–95.19, 107.11–108.8; Nicol 1993: 45; Gounarides 1999: 40–42.
59 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 349.4–25.
60 Gregoras meant the part of the Matins, called the Great Doxology, a special solemn prayer 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men'.
61 Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 94.10–19.
62 When the dying sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn Kılıç Arslān II (1156–1192) appointed as his heir apparent Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I (1192–1196, 1205–1211) out of his other sons, he proclaimed him 'possessor of the crown and the seal-ring'. When the sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs I (1211–1219) died without issue, the courtiers brought to his brother ʿAlā' al-Dīn Kay-Qubād I (1219–1237) the turban and the seal-ring of the late sultan as a symbol (*nishān*) of power. İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi (1956): 17, 204; Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 4, 84; trans. Duda 1959: 18, 92.
63 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 631.1–12, 657.9–22; *PLP* 21492; Failler 1982: 171–180. According to Failler, the younger sons of the emperor wore the clothes, but did not have the rank, of the Despot in the thirteenth century. Cf. Zakos' observation: 'Constantine is always mentioned in the sources as *porphyrogennetos*, and never as *despotes*; his rank in the court was higher than *despotes* and lower than *basileus*. The same rank was later bestowed on Matthew, son of John VI': Zakos and Vegleri 1972–84, vol. 1.3, seal 2758: 1586. On John II Grand Komnenos and his visit to Constantinople, see Karpov 2007: 192–195.
64 Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux 1976: 203.1–11; trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 142–143. On the co-emperorship in the empire of Nicaea, see Zhavoronkov 2006a.
65 In this case the expression 'the insignia of power', τοῖς τῆς ἀρχῆς συμβόλοις, in Pachymeres should be understood as an equivalent of the 'insignia of the imperial power', τὰ βασιλείας σύμβολα, in Pseudo-Kodinos (ed. Verpeaux 1976: 344.5–6), which suggests the insignia of the Despot, Sebastokrator and Caesar.
66 Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux 1976: 144.2; trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 36–39.
67 *PLP* 21426.
68 Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux 1976: 232.11–238.4; trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 180–187.
69 Laurent 1956: 357, 363.
70 Aksarayi, ed. Turan (1944): 70.
71 Korobeinikov (2014): 13.
72 Ed. Beihammer (2007): 47.
73 Namely ἀμήρας τῶν ἀμηράδων and μέγας σαχνᾶς.
74 Symeon Metaphrastes, *Menology (February-April)*, MS Bodleain Library, Holkham Gr. 19, fol. 154r; ed. Demus and Hutter (1977–1997), vol. 3.1: 81–82.

75 Aksarayi, ed. Turan 1944: 74, 89, 97, 100.

76 ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm ibn Shaddād, *Ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, ed. Ḥuṭayṭ 1983: 161–164; Cahen 2001: 199–202.

77 *Tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq dar Ānāṭūlī*, ed. Jalālī 1999: 107, ed. Uzluk 1952: 63; İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 742, Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 337, trans. Duda 1959: 325; Aksarayi, ed. Turan 1944: 137–138; Cahen 2001: 212; Turan 2010: 599–600.

78 Cf. Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 774, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fols. 376a–b: after the flight of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kāwūs II to the Golden Horde, his two sons remained in Byzantium. The emperor gave Karavīrya to the elder son and made the younger one the emperor's retainer. Cf. also: Wittek 1952: 648 (§7), 656.

79 I.e. among the retainers of Andronikos II. '*Takwūr* (*tākwar*)', from the Armenian *t'agawor*, 'king', was one of the designations of the Byzantine emperors in the Ottoman sources.

80 The whole story, including the piece translated, is in: Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 854–855, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fols. 415a–b; Wittek 1952: 649–650 (§11–12), 658–660.

81 The identification of Masʿūd II and Melik Masour in Pachymeres is based on two suggestions. First, when in Byzantium in 1261–1264/5, he was called, according to Ibn Bibi, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Malik Masʿūd (İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 639). Pachymeres might have remembered him as Malik Masʿūd afterwards. Secondly, if Pachymeres used a translation from an Arabic, or Persian, or Turkish source, a mistake in writing Masʿūd as Masʿūr was more than possible, as the letters د [d] and ر[r] often look very similar in the manuscripts: Korobeinikov 2001: 98.

82 This is based on the reading *al-malik al-manṣūr*, as some manuscripts of Pachymeres have Μανσούρ instead of Μασούρ. *Al-malik al-manṣūr* ('The victorious king') was a common title of the Seljuk princes and sultans. Beldiceanu-Steinherr 2000: 427; Korobeinikov 2004: 99–103.

83 Korobeinikov 2001: 83–88; Cahen 2001: 216–224; Turan 2010: 618–622, 625–633.

84 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 359.8–365.12, 673.23–675.4.

85 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 673.28–34.

86 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 2: 673.34–675.16; Shukurov 2008: 108–109; Wittek 1952: 660–665; Zachariadou 1964–65: 64, 71–74. On the chronology, see Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 5 (Index): 15; Failler 1994.

87 The word τρισόλβιος can be found (to name but a few) in Sophocles (Radt 1977: 837.1), Aristophanes (*Ecclessiazusae* l.1129), Lucian (*Nigrinus* 1.9; *Catalpus* 16.11) and Plutarch (*Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat (14d–37b)*, ed. Babbitt 1927, repr. 1969, Stephanus: 21, Section F, l.6). However, in Byzantium the τρισόλβιος was a common term in Christian poetry and writings, cf. Romanos the Melode, ed. Maas and Trypanis 1970, Hymn 74, proem strophe strop 12.3, Hymn 76 proem strophe strop 3.1; Ephraem Aenii, *Historia Chronica*, ed. Lampsidis 1990: 195.5407; Ephraem Aenii, *Chronicon patriarchum Constantinopoleos*, in Ephraem Aenii, *Chronicon*, ed. Bekker 1840: 391.9753; John Chrysostom, *De adoratione pretiosae cruces*, in *PG* 52, col. 835.34, and *In adorationem venerandae cruces*, in *PG* 62, col. 747.24; John of Damascus, *Orationes de imaginibus tres*, ed. Kotter 1975, vol. 1:16.18. There, the τρισόλβιος was an epithet of the Holy Cross. Philes, whose poetical vocabulary contained no less than thirteen mentions of the τρισόλβιος, applied it to Christ, the Holy Cross, the patriarch Niphon I (1310–1314), and in the *kondakion* to the Virgin: Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 2, poem 14: 51.429, poem 56: 103.98, Appendix, poem 1: 325.143; ed. Martini 1900, poem 95: 136.3.

88 Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, ed. Tittmann 1808, repr. 1967, letter T: 1749.10.

89 For the τρισόλβιος and τρισμακάριστος during the Palaiologan period, see: Gregory Chioniades, *Letters*, ed. Papadopoulos 1927: 193 (the letter was adressed πρὸς τὸν

τρισμακάριστον. . . Κύριον Ἀλέξιον βασιλέα τὸν Μέγαν Κομνηνόν, i.e. to Alexios II Grand Komnenos (1297–1330), the emperor of Trebizond); Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 1, poem 44: 224.80, poem 63: 235.4, poem 75: 247.10. vol. 2, poem 11: 359.67; ed. Martini 1900, poem 96: 138.25. The only exclusions in Philes' poetry were the mentions of the various 'three times blessed' cities and, just once, a 'three times blessed youth' Georgios Kapandrites: Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 2, poem 62: 130.73, poem 237: 255.331; ed. Martini 1900, poem 89: 127.1 (cf. *PLP* 11008; Zachariadou 1964–65: 69).

90 Constantine Manasses, *Chronicle*, ed. Bekker 1837: 111.2551, and ed. Lampsidis 1996: 139. The rose was Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180); see also the excellent translation of Smyka 2012: 234–235. Cf. Philes, ed. Miller 1855–57, vol. 1, poem 223: 118.16; vol. 2, poem 242: 261.13–14; Appendix, poem 11: 362.129.

91 Baybars, ed. Richards 1998: 168; Tiesenhausen 1884, 1941, vol. 1: 81 (103 in the Russian translation).

92 İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 735–739; Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 334–335; trans. Duda 1959: 322–323.

93 Ed. Lampros 1911: 159.14.

94 Kinnamos, *Ethopoiia*, ed. Bánhegyi 1943: l.64; Nikephoros Basilakes, *Λόγος εἰς τὸν σεβαστὸν κῦρ Ἀδριανὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ σεβαστοκράτορος κυροῦ Ἰσαακίου Κομνηνοῦ καὶ αὐταδέλφου τοῦ βασιλέως κυροῦ Ἀλεξίου τὸν διὰ τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ σχήματος Ἰωάννην μετονομασθέντα*, ed. Garzya 1984: 34.30; Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Commentary on Homer's* Iliad, ed. van der Valk 1971–87, vol. 1: 59.14, 65.3, 213.7, and vol. 3: 217l.4; Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, letter E: 651.10; letter I: 106.3.

95 His great-grandfather Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I (1192–1196, 1205–1211) mounted a mare of enormous size and had strong confidence in his bodily superiority over Theodore I Laskaris (1208–1222) in the battle at Antioch-on-the-Maeander in 1211: Akropolites 10, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth 1978, vol. 1: 16.26–17.12, trans. Macrides 2007: 131–132, trans. Zhavoronkov 2005: 54.

96 According to Zachariadou 1964–65: 72, there were three Christian sons of Kay-Kāwūs II, besides the Muslim ones: Melik Constantine, Athanasios Soultanos (*PLP* 26337) and the Soultan of our verses of Philes (*PLP* 26333). Zachariadou did not read the Soultan in Philes as a title 'sultan' (as I do), but as a name. She further suggested that our Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos had a brother Alexios Soultanos Palaiologos (*PLP* 26338), despite the statement in Philes that Demetrios was '*alas, the only one [child] from the second birth*' (οὗτος ἦν εἷς ἐκ γονῆς, φεῦ, δευτέρας); moreover, Demetrios Soultanos Palaiologos was not a contemporary of Philes: when the epitaph was composed, '*the froth laid near his dry bones*'. Zhavoronkov 2006b: 168–171, 174, who accepted the conclusions of Zachariadou and employed more extensively the data in Ibn Bibi, suggested four sons in 1261: Masʿūd II, Melik Masour, Melik Constantine and Rukn al-Dīn Kayūmarth, while Athanasios Soultanos and the Soultan in Philes were the sons of a certain Melik, the brother of Kay-Kāwūs II, who had moved to Nicaea before him in 1261 (Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 149.18–20; Gregoras, ed. Schopen and Bekker 1829–55, vol. 1: 82.4–8). His identifications contradict Philes. The study of Shukurov 2008: 107–111, though he did not consult Philes, demonstrated a more succinct and accurate approach. He correctly stated that Melik, the brother of Kay-Kāwūs II, did not exist. He was an invention of Gregoras, who misinterpreted the data in Pachymeres. His final list of the sultan's sons is: Masʿūd II (= Melik Masour), Melik Constantine, Rukn al-Dīn Kayūmarth and, presumably, a certain hieromonk Sabbas, 'called Soltan' in the *Synaxarion* of Sougdaia/Surozh, who died in 1320. His identification of the fourth son of Kay-Kāwūs II is based on the very shaky grounds of Sarı Saltuk's story in Yazıcıoğlu Ali.

97 *Acts of Vatopedi*, ed. Bompaire, Lefort, Kravari and Giros 2001, doc. 62: 336.69–77, doc. 64: 349, 355–356.64–70; Zachariadou 1964–65: 67, 69–70. Shukurov 2008:

113–116, correctly excluded Athanasios Soultan from the list of Kay-Kāwūs II's sons on the chronological grounds.

98 Kirakos Gandzakets'i, *Patmut'yun Hayots'*, ed. Melik'-Ōhanjanyan 1961: 317; Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Istoriia Armenii*, trans. Khanlarian 1976: 196, and trans. Bedrosian 1986: 266.

99 Akropolites, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth 1978, vol. 1: 162.19–22, cf. trans. Zhavoronkov 2005: 289, n. 980; Grégoire 1959–60: 451. On the connections between the Batazai and Palaiologoi families, see Korobeinikov 2011: 136.

100 John Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meineke 1836: 204. 22–206.11 (hereafter Kinnamos); trans. Brand 1976: 156–157; Euthymios Malakes, Λόγος εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα κύριον Μανουὴλ τὸν Κομνηνόν, ἐκφωνηθεὶς ὅτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν ὁ σουλτᾶνος προσελθὼν αὐτῷ, ed. Papadopoulo-Kerameus 1913, repr. 1976: 165.17–167.31; Korobeinikov 2008: 714–732; Beihammer 2011: 634–639. On the *anabathra* ceremony and its difference from the *prokypsis*, see Poliakovskaia 2011: 59–70; *prokypsis*, always outdoors, was a representation on a lit platform of the *standing* emperor surrounded with his family and the Despots, then of the sole emperor without his entourage, while *anabathra*, always indoors (which is why it was never mixed with the *prokypsis* in Pseudo-Kodinos), suggested a dais in the form of a staircase, with the emperor's throne on top, and sometimes surrounded with the thrones of the imperial family. Beihammer thought that the reception of 1162 was that of the *prokypsis*, but the mention of the throne and the palace in Kinnamos (ed. Meineke 1836: 205.5–9, 206.11) strongly suggests the *anabathra*. Cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 401–411; the *prokypsis* was an innovation on the part of Manuel I; not every ceremony on a platform was called *prokypsis*; according to Pseudo-Kodinos, the *prokypsis* was performed only two times per year, on Christmas Eve and the Epiphany.

101 Kinnamos, ed. Meineke 1836: 206.10; Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Commentary on Homer's* Iliad, ed. van der Valk 1971–87, vol. 1: 301.27–28.

102 One should note that the Despots in the Nicaean empire were exclusively the members of the Laskarid and Palaiologan dynasties: Zhavoronkov 1991: 84–86.

103 Simon de Saint-Quentin, *Histoire des Tartares*, ed. Richard 1965: 82; cf. Lindner 1974: 411; Apanovich 2007: 191, n. 135.

104 Jolivet-Lévy 2002: 289.

105 Thierry and Thierry 1963: 202; Laurent 1968: [ἐπὶ] μὲν τοῦ πανηυψηλοτ[άτου] μεγαλογένους μεγάλου σουλτάν[ου Μα]σούτη, ἐπὶ δὲ Ῥωμέων βασιλέβοντος κυ(ροῦ) Ἀν[δρονίκου]. . .; Bees 1922: 7: ἐπὶ βασιλείας τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτωρος Ῥωμαίων κυροῦ Ἀνδρονίκου· ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις βασιλεύοντος μεγαλογενοὺς μεγάλου σουλτὰν Μασούτι τοῦ Καϊκαούσι καὶ αὐθέντου ἡμῶν (1288/9); Shukurov 2006: 210–217.

106 Duran 2001: 58, n. 33.

107 Uzunçarşılı 1929: 234–235.

108 Peacock 2004: 102.

109 John Zonaras 17.27.16–17, ed. Büttner-Wobst 1897: 758.5–13.

110 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 15.6.5, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 478.74–79.

111 Michel the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Chabot 1899–1910, vol. 3: 223–224 (French translation), and vol. 4: 608–609 (Syriac text).

112 Hillenbrand 2007: 164.

113 Shukurov 2013: 134.

114 Astarābādī 1928: 45; Shukurov 2013: 117.

115 Combe, Sauvaget and Wiet 1931–64, vol. 11, 4146–4147: 95–96.

116 Beihammer 2011: 648. His conclusion is based almost entirely on the Byzantine sources.

117 Peacock and Yıldız 2013: 3.

118 Cf. Choniates' remark on the father–son relationships between emperor Manuel I and Kılıç Arslān II: 'But their friendship was not honest, nor did they honour their treaties'. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten 1975: 123.74–80, trans. Magoulias 1984: 70.
119 Korobeinikov 2014: 290–294.
120 Pachymeres, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 1: 347.9–15.
121 Hasluck 1929.
122 Korobeinikov 2013: 81.
123 Bardakhlades (Bardakhlas) are the newly discovered Byzantine family in the Seljuk service. On them, see: İbn-i Bībī, ed. Erzi 1956: 277, ed. Houtsma 1902: 119, trans. Duda 1959: 123, Yazıcızâde Ali, ed. Bakır 2009: 412–413, MS Topkapı Sarayı R.1391, fol. 195b; Eustratiades 1930: 337; Gedeon 1939: 287; *Testament for the Monastery of the Mother of God at Skoteine near Philadelphia*, trans. G. Dennis in Thomas and Hero, with assistance of Constable 2000, vol. 3: 1189; ed. Miklosich and Müller 1860–90, vol. 4: 155, 180; Ferrari Dalli Spade 1935: 263, 267; Ahrweiler 1965: 148, 168; *PLP* 2208–2211.
124 Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma 1902: 14, trans. Duda 1959: 27.
125 Cf. Prinzing 2014: 29–33, though he advances other criteria.

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Court and empire


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5

CELIBACY AND SURVIVAL IN COURT POLITICS IN THE FIFTH CENTURY AD[1]

Meaghan McEvoy

Introduction

The reign of the emperor Theodosius II (408–450), which spanned almost the entire first half of the fifth century, is remarkable in a number of respects: in its largely unchallenged and relatively peaceful rule, its major legal codification project, and its theological entanglements.[2] But it is also remarkable for the extraordinary policy taken by the imperial house towards marriage alliances with its elites. The resolve made by the teenage sisters of Theodosius II in the 410s to embrace lives of piety and virginity rather than marriage and childbearing ultimately rendered the imperial family almost extinct. Recent scholarship has linked this refusal of the eastern Theodosians to marry with a desire to avoid the elevation of military men in particular to positions in which they might come to dominate the government, as had occurred at the court of Honorius, Theodosius' western colleague until 423.[3] Yet this avoidance of alliance was in effect a lack of future planning by the Theodosians, which was an important factor in the many crises surrounding the throne that came to dominate the second half of the fifth century in the East.[4]

Theodosius II had been born into a long-reigning dynasty. His grandfather, Theodosius I, had come to the throne in 379, and ruling for 16 years was succeeded by his son, Theodosius II's father Arcadius, who reigned from 395 until his death in 408. Initially ruling in conjunction with the Valentinian dynasty in the West (from 379 to 393), from 395 the Theodosians governed both East and West, with Theodosius II's uncle Honorius reigning from 395 to 423 in Italy.[5] By the time of the death of Theodosius II in 450, the family had ruled the later Roman empire for more than 70 years. Few still living could have remembered any other ruling family, and that some sort of dynastic provision for the future would be made by Theodosius II would seem to be a reasonable expectation.

Although the Roman imperial office was not constitutionally hereditary, the trend towards dynastic succession was present from the earliest days of the principate, and as recent scholarship has explored, had shown every sign of increasing during and following the long rule of the Constantinian dynasty in the fourth century.[6] Emperors almost inevitably aimed to hand their position on to sons, if

they had them, and the Tetrarchic system established by Diocletian in 296 had itself been undermined by the assertion of rights to hereditary rule by overlooked candidates such as Constantine and Maxentius.[7] The Valentinian and Theodosian dynasties in their turn had done much to consolidate an aura of imperial dynasticism through early promotion of their sons to the highest rank of co-Augustus.[8] The lack of provision for the eastern succession under Theodosius II and his sisters therefore comes as a surprise – though the full repercussions of the vows of the emperor's sisters were unlikely to have been recognised at the time – and arguably resulted in both crises and opportunities for those at the heart of court politics in 450 when the long-reigning emperor died.[9]

As noted above, this avoidance of marriage by Theodosius II's sisters has been linked to a concerted effort to avoid alliances with powerful military men as had occurred at the western court in the same period. And indeed, according to A.H.M. Jones, in the early fifth century, the dominant powers of the courts of the emperors Arcadius, Honorius and Theodosius II, differed significantly:

> In the west the men who actually ruled the empire in the name of the fainéant monarchs were almost always generals; in the east the generals played no prominent role and the reins of power were usually held by civilian ministers, the praetorian prefects or the masters of the officers, or by the eunuchs of the palace.[10]

As Jones explained, with reference to the arrangements laid out in the *Notitia Dignitatum*,[11] since the time of Theodosius I, military power in the East was divided into five major commands, the most prestigious being the two posts of *magister militum praesentalis*, entailing attendance upon the emperor himself.[12] According to Jones, this system was designed to prevent any one general gaining supreme power, in contrast to the West, where only two posts of *magister militum* existed within the military high command, and where individual generals such as Stilicho and Fl. Constantius (both of whom also married into the imperial family) were thereby enabled to dominate the government in the early fifth century.[13] The apparent contrast in court dominance by civilian officers at the eastern court is reflected in unusually long-serving office-holders such as the praetorian prefect Anthemius (on whom see further below) and the *magister officiorum* Helion.[14] On closer examination of the activities of the powerful military families of the East across the fifth century however, a different picture is revealed: one of long-term political influence passed down through generations of military families, and it is this alternative picture of the individuals at the heart of the eastern court which will be examined here.

From 414 onwards, the Theodosian imperial house of the East adopted what was essentially an 'exclusion' policy (one could even call it a 'self-destruct' policy) which saw them refuse to enter any alliances whatsoever with outsiders, with the single exception of the emperor Theodosius II's own marriage in 421. In the longer term this policy was to have very serious repercussions: when

Theodosius II died in 450, since his marriage had not produced a son, there was no obvious blood relation in the eastern realm to acclaim in his place, and he had named no heir.[15] Over the following decades, a number of serious succession crises were to arise in the East, following the long and unchallenged rule of Theodosius II, and with Jones' comments above in mind, it is important to note that these crises were predominantly military in nature.[16]

This is an important topic for investigation and can only be briefly touched upon in the space available here. What I will focus on in this chapter therefore in addition to the imperial family, are two significant eastern families who took a decidedly different path to the Theodosians, and whose alliances and activities saw their descendants appear in major offices and as decision-makers at crucial moments right across the course of the fifth century. For, as recent scholarship has highlighted, despite the importance of the various civilian officials to whom power in this period is often attributed, there is no doubt that the generals of Theodosius II's reign remained influential individuals.[17] Indeed, their ultimate ambitions suggest that the young imperial family were right to be cautious of alliance with them – yet the policy of non-alliance too, proved to be a fruitless one in the longer term.

From origins in high-ranking military and civilian offices, these two non-imperial families established dynasties of service, accumulating wealth and influence over generations. It is noteworthy however that each family, though arguably differing initially to the Theodosians in their goals, by the late fifth century were also aiming for the throne. And while the court of Theodosius II may not be seen traditionally as dominated by military men, an important development was taking place behind the scenes which was to have a major impact on the politics of the later fifth century: the development of inter-connected military dynasties of the highest rank, whose families maintained their high positions across the century with the successive appointments over time of fathers, sons and grandsons to the post of *magister militum*.[18] Given the once essential role of the emperor as an active military leader,[19] the aims of these military dynasties in establishing themselves firmly in the highest echelons of the empire's commanding elite is arguably less different to the aims of an imperial family than might be suggested.

Although the most prominent individual members of each of the two families I will examine here – the Ardaburii and the Anthemii – have received some attention in recent scholarship, their long-term activities and handing down of wealth and power over generations have rarely been analysed as a whole.[20] Yet their long-term influence on fifth-century politics, from early in the reign of Theodosius II onwards, is deserving of attention for the light it can throw on the alliance-building of elite families close to the imperial court in this era. Outliving the Theodosians, and exercising immense influence during the reigns of the emperors Marcian (450–457) and Leo I (457–474), these two families were determined dynasts of the fifth century court, carefully building up their influence and connections across the course of Theodosius II's reign. When Theodosius II died in 450, their almost instant prominence in leading political roles and decisions surrounding the succession

suggest that while a civilian-dominated government might have characterised the appearance of the eastern court under the 'unwarlike' Theodosius,[21] military factions were still very much at the forefront of decision-making. How therefore did the Anthemii and the Ardaburii maintain – and indeed build – their position and influence across the course of the century? And did the Theodosian anti-alliance policy, in refusing alliances with such families itself, succeed in protecting the imperial family, but not, ultimately, the stability of imperial rule?

The Theodosian anti-alliance policy

When Arcadius died in 408, Theodosius, Augustus since the age of nine months, was only seven years of age. He and his sisters, the eldest of whom, Pulcheria, was still only nine years of age herself, were thus orphaned, without any known relatives at the eastern court. This was an entirely unprecedented situation for any imperial dynasty in Roman history: the accession of an orphaned child-emperor without even a relative's support or guardianship.[22] It is remarkable indeed that there was no known attempt to wrest the throne from Theodosius, a marvel noted by fifth-century historians.[23] It was the praetorian prefect Anthemius, to whom we shall return to shortly, who was the mainstay of the government from 408 until 414.

Child-emperor rule was still a fairly new phenomenon in the early fifth-century East.[24] Theodosius II's father Arcadius had been raised as co-Augustus in 383 at the age of only six years of age, but had reached his late teens by the time of the death of Theodosius I and his accession as sole ruler of the East in 395.[25] The succession of seven-year-old Theodosius II as sole ruler in 408 when Arcadius died however, marked the youngest such full accession in Roman history to date, and the long reign to follow was to contribute significantly to an ongoing transformation of the imperial office in both East and West in this period brought about by successive child-emperor regimes. The rule of a child as young as Theodosius II necessarily entailed the long-term delegation of imperial functions, the adaptation of the presentation of the emperor to deal with such a paradoxical situation, and the consolidation of a new, largely ceremonial, sedentary and civilian style of imperial rule in the first half of the fifth century, as opposed to the military emperors of the century before.[26] The new focus on Constantinople as the main imperial centre of the East, begun particularly under Theodosius I and continued under Arcadius, was cemented during the reign of Theodosius II, who only rarely left the city, further developing also the relationship between the imperial court and the populace of Constantinople.[27]

Although religious function generally had long been an important role of the emperor, and since the conversion of Constantine I the Christianisation of the imperial office had grown inexorably, the sources for the reign of Theodosius II provide the most extensive and remarkable picture of how the extraordinary piety of a child-emperor might become his most conspicuous virtue – indeed the virtue from which all other imperial virtues sprang. The contemporary Constantinopolitan historians Sozomen and Socrates offer considerable information about Theodosius'

education and the extraordinary virtues he exhibited during both childhood and adulthood.[28] According to Sozomen, the young Theodosius II's mind was imbued with piety and love of prayer,[29] while Socrates reported that his palace was so regulated that it differed little from a monastery, with the young emperor and his sisters rising early in the morning to sing hymns, fasting frequently, learning scriptures by heart, and engaging in learned discussions with bishops.[30] Whereas in the past, piety had been one of many laudable imperial functions, as child-emperor rule and the means of making it plausible developed, piety was coming to be the first and foremost of the imperial virtues.[31]

Such conspicuous emphasis continued on into the adult years of this emperor who had come to the throne as a young child. Thus we find the eastern army's victory over the western usurper John in 425, according to the sources, occurring as a result of the prayers of Theodosius (who was not present on the campaign),[32] while according to Sozomen,

> it was the design of God to show by the events of this period, that piety alone suffices for the safety and prosperity of princes; and that without piety, armies, a powerful empire, and political resources, are of no avail.[33]

It is not surprising to find ecclesiastical historians prioritising reports of Theodosius II's piety given the focus of their writings generally, and these reports may of course reflect more the views of Socrates and Sozomen of what was important in a ruler than the views of the emperor himself.[34] Yet it is important to note that this stress upon the way in which a child-emperor was presented – as inherently pious and the epitome of the Christian ruler – was entirely in keeping with the presentation in the West of child-emperors of the same period, such as Valentinian II (383–392), Honorius (395–423) and Valentinian III (425–455), and was an emphasis which appeared in a variety of sources – ecclesiastical, legislative, and material.[35] And what is particularly important to note in the case of Theodosius II is that both Sozomen and Socrates wrote during the emperor's adulthood rather than his childhood.[36] Thus while the praising of a child-emperor's piety might seem an obvious recourse when he was too young to have any other remarkable deeds, particularly military, to celebrate, the fact that this continued to be the main vein in which Theodosius II was praised even as an adult (and when he was old enough to take up a military role), suggests that it was an integral part of the public presentation of this particular emperor.[37]

In 414, the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen reports on a momentous decision by the eldest sister of Theodosius II, Pulcheria, to embrace a life of virginity, publicly taking a vow to this effect, with her younger sisters doing likewise.[38] This was a remarkable action for a fourteen-year-old imperial woman,[39] and scholarly discussion of Pulcheria's motives has focused on Sozomen's reasoning that she acted to avoid allowing any men into the palace, the obvious inference being that, having reached marriageable age, Pulcheria was determined *not* to be married off

to a man who might eclipse the power of her young brother, or indeed herself.[40] That the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen should have chosen to focus on this motivation rather than emphasising instead Pulcheria's innate piety or a genuine vocation for a celibate life is particularly interesting, suggesting that the political implications of her decision were well-recognised at the time. The community of ascetic women established by the aristocratic Olympias and guided by the patriarch John Chrysostom was a recent memory in Constantinople, of which the establishment of a group of three imperial virginal women in the palace might easily have evoked memories.[41] Pulcheria's motivation might also arguably have been found in a desire to maintain a position of personal influence at court and avoid being sidelined by marriage, but her role would always have been contingent on the eventual marriage of her brother Theodosius II.

The piety of the emperor's virginal sisters came to be advertised as a unique aspect of this generation of the Theodosian house's claim to the throne and its assurance of the security of the empire. The vows of the emperor's sisters were built into the public image of Theodosius' regime, and according to Sozomen, the Theodosian women's decision ultimately meant that God's favour was manifested 'towards their family, and the state; and the emperor . . . while all seditions and wars undertaken against him . . . spontaneously [came] to nought'.[42] Whatever the precise motivation for Pulcheria's resolve, it was inherently a defensive action, designed to protect the young family from unwelcome intruders – there would be no dangerous liaisons in the East between the imperial house and its officials or generals.[43] For the tiny clique of the imperial family itself, it has to be said that it was a spectacularly successful policy: throughout the long reign of Theodosius II there were no credible attempts at usurpation. Yet it was also a policy which gave the dynasty no future.[44]

According to Sozomen, following her vow of virginity in 414, Pulcheria essentially took over the reins of her brother's administration, was proclaimed Augusta,[45] and 'governed the empire excellently and with great orderliness', despite her youth.[46] Recent studies suggest we should be cautious with regard to the true extent of Pulcheria's likely ability to manage a government in which women had no legislative authority.[47] Yet although Pulcheria's ability to direct her brother's government must have been much more limited than the sources allow, the long-term implications for the dynasty of her vow (and those of her sisters) were wide-ranging. The decision was made: the emperor's sisters would never marry, never thereby providing the family with close allies of blood within the aristocracy (military or civilian) of Constantinople; and while Theodosius must choose a wife and produce an heir, the attitude of the court towards imperial security, stability and victory through celibacy cannot have been a great encouragement to him in this matter.

In 421 Theodosius II married, notably a young woman who came not from a noble or military family in Constantinople but from a family in Athens, apparently brought to the attention of the emperor through a legal suit against her brothers.[48] Although this alliance did see family members of the young

empress (originally named Athenais but renamed Eudocia when baptised prior to the marriage) rise to high office in government,[49] it did not see the development of a family domination of the court in the way it might have been feared an alliance with a powerful Constantinopolitan family would do. Theodosius and Eudocia became estranged in the early 440s and the empress moved thereafter to live permanently at Jerusalem, away from the court.[50] In the course of their nevertheless long marriage however, only one child, a girl, was to survive infancy – Licinia Eudoxia, who in 438 married the western Augustus, her cousin Valentinian III.[51]

It was not unusual for male imperial heirs to be in short supply – Theodosius II's colleague for the early part of his reign, the western emperor Honorius, produced no children from two marriages,[52] while even the house of Constantine had ultimately struggled, in the second generation, to produce male heirs.[53] And constitutionally, with his fellow Augustus (and son-in-law) Valentinian III in the West, Theodosius II, in theory at least, needed no other heir. Nevertheless it is surprising that, following the heavily dynastic accessions in both the East and West over the previous century, providing a son (or even adopting one – a practice which seems to have fallen into disuse) to rule the eastern empire after his death does not appear to have been a pressing concern to the emperor. The ecclesiastical sources report that Theodosius aspired to an ascetic ideal, wearing the filthy sack-cloth of a deceased bishop as a cloak in the hope of absorbing some of his sanctity,[54] and was himself 'a pattern to all true prelates'.[55] Was this perhaps a case of public image taking precedence over dynastic longevity?

Theodosius II was a decidedly unmilitary emperor: despite his continuing depiction in military garb on coinage,[56] there is no hint he ever commanded his army in the field, even for exercises, and at least one source would criticise him for always choosing diplomacy rather than war.[57] Yet, in contrast to the West in the early fifth century, facing multiple barbarian incursions, usurpations in Gaul, and dominated by two powerful generals, first Stilicho and then Fl. Constantius, the early fifth-century East of Arcadius and the young Theodosius II does seem remarkably peaceful. Perhaps it is no surprise that the youthful emperor's government should appear to be a largely civilian enterprise – and indeed the takeover of Constantinople by the general Gainas in 400, and the bloody riots which had resulted on that occasion perhaps made those who remembered it keen that the young Theodosius' reign should remain civilian-dominated.[58] But as the steady rise of the military dynasty of the Ardaburii and the newly-military dynasty of Anthemius across the course of Theodosius II's reign indicate, military men had by no means faded into the background. The Theodosians, the Ardaburii and the Anthemii may have differed in their motivations as they made or refused various alliances over the decades – the Theodosians aiming to hold onto the throne and the Ardaburii and the Anthemii aiming ultimately to acquire it – yet the court dominance of each family must have made them acutely aware of the decisions taken and the opportunities they offered.

The Anthemii

Turning to the other families around whom this chapter is focused, we begin with the praetorian prefect Anthemius, a dominant figure in government from the earliest years of Theodosius II's reign.[59] According to the ecclesiastical historian Socrates, when the emperor Arcadius died in 408 and the government devolved upon his young son, the management of public affairs was entrusted to Anthemius, the praetorian prefect of the East who held this post for a remarkable nine years, from 405 until 414.[60] Of the nature of Anthemius' government as praetorian prefect, Socrates declared that: 'He was justly esteemed as the most prudent man of his time, and seldom did anything unadvisedly.'[61] He was credited also with initiating the building of the Theodosian Land Walls at Constantinople; for which Theodosius II praised his zeal and foresight in a constitution dating to 413 when they were nearly complete.[62] The praetorian prefect Anthemius is, presumably, one of the key civilian advisers Jones has in mind, in his comparison of the eastern and western courts.[63]

Anthemius' sudden disappearance from the sources in 414, roughly around the time of Pulcheria's vow has prompted some modern scholars to link the two events. According to Holum, Pulcheria's vow was a response to a specific threat of marriage with a relative of Anthemius; the nefarious scheme had led ultimately to his disgrace and downfall, and to Pulcheria's vow of virginity.[64] As many scholars have since pointed out however, if Anthemius' disappearance were due to such a plot, it could hardly explain the continued influence and office-holding of the family; it is far more likely that the praetorian prefect, who was by 414 an elderly man, simply died.[65]

It was probably during the early 420s that a daughter of the praetorian prefect Anthemius married a military man by the name of Procopius, who served as *magister militum per Orientem* from 422 to 426.[66] The son of this marriage, named after his maternal grandfather, would raise the family to still greater heights. The younger Anthemius was, like his father, a military man. We hear little of his early career, other than that prior to 453 he served as a *comes*, presumably with some distinction: around that date he was married to Aelia Marcia Euphemia, only daughter of the reigning emperor Marcian. Following this illustrious marriage, he continued in active military service (now as a *magister militum praesentalis*),[67] was appointed consul in 455, and accorded the title of patrician.[68]

It might reasonably have been expected that Anthemius would succeed Marcian as eastern emperor in 457; in the event when he was passed over for Leo I, Anthemius accepted the accession without dispute and continued to serve loyally under the new emperor.[69] Finally, in 467, following an eighteen-month interregnum in the West after the death of the emperor Libius Severus (461–465), Leo appointed Anthemius as the new western emperor.[70] Leo sent his new colleague to Italy, and provided Anthemius with considerable military and financial support in order to establish his rule; however this was not enough to break the stranglehold of the *magister militum* Ricimer on western affairs. After a six-year reign, Anthemius was killed in the course of civil war with Ricimer.[71]

At least two of Anthemius and Euphemia's sons remained in Constantinople after their father left for the West, and made exceptionally good marriages. In 471, Anthemius' son, Fl. Marcianus, married Leontia, the younger daughter of the emperor Leo, and was also appointed *magister militum praesentalis* under Leo, though he would later revolt unsuccessfully against his brother-in-law the emperor Zeno (474–491) in 479 and be tonsured and exiled.[72] Fl. Marcianus' brother, Procopius Anthemius, also seems to have made a very good match: to a very wealthy woman by the name of Herais, and their marriage bore a son whom they named Zeno.[73] Despite the disgrace of Fl. Marcianus' revolt, this boy Zeno was in the 480s promised in marriage to Longina, the niece of the emperor Zeno.[74] The betrothal of this son of Procopius Anthemius to the niece of the emperor Zeno (bearing in mind especially that the emperor had no living son by this point) positioned the family of Anthemius once again in extremely close proximity to the throne. The marriage never eventuated, since the girl's father fell from favour; yet the high standing of the family still under the emperor Anastasius (491–518) is reflected in Procopius Anthemius' consulship in 515. The descendants of the praetorian prefect Anthemius therefore, to whom the management of the government had been entrusted by the emperors Arcadius and Theodosius II a century earlier, played a prominent role not only in fifth-century politics, but beyond.

The Ardaburii

We turn now to the Ardaburii. Unlike the family of Anthemius, this was a non-Roman, unashamedly 'barbarian' family of Alan and Gothic origins, which makes its first appearance in our sources in the 420s, with Fl. Ardaburius attested as a *magister militum* in 421 in connection with Theodosius II's war with Persia.[75] In 424, Ardaburius and his son, Fl. Ardaburius Aspar, were joined in command of the ultimately victorious expedition to establish the child Valentinian III as emperor of the West.[76] In 431 Aspar led an eastern army to North Africa to assist a western army trying to hold back the Vandal advance and Aspar was named western consul for 434.[77] He is attested as a *magister militum* by this point, and may already have held the command in 424. Though the late 440s have been seen as a period of declining influence for Aspar's family,[78] when Theodosius II died in 450, Aspar had influence enough nevertheless to secure the succession of his own former *domesticus*, Marcian, as the new eastern emperor.[79] Doubtless this was an arrangement upon which a number of influential individuals or groups had to agree, such as other important generals and the Augusta Pulcheria, who despite her vow of virginity more than three decades earlier, saw fit to legitimise the accession by marrying Marcian, as noted above, with the proviso that her vow be respected. The degree of involvement of Pulcheria and others in the accession has been much debated, but one thing we may be sure of is that, while we do not know if Pulcheria had even heard of Marcian before 450, Aspar certainly had.[80]

Across the course of a long career, Aspar allied his family with a number of other notable military men, including the general Plinta,[81] and the Gothic chieftain Theoderic Strabo.[82] From his own three marriages, Aspar had three sons: Ardaburius Iunior, Patricius, and Herminericus, whose careers we shall return to shortly. The influence of the Ardaburii grew further under Marcian: by early 451 Aspar was a *patricius*, and his eldest son Ardaburius Iunior was appointed *magister militum per Orientem* in 453.[83] With the death of Marcian in 457, the family looked set to reach still greater heights: we have already seen Anthemius, Marcian's son-in-law, was passed over for the throne. Instead the new emperor was Leo, another former officer from Aspar's retinue, under whom both Aspar and his son retained their high offices.[84] In 466 however, the family suffered a severe blow when the Isaurian soldier Zeno came to court bearing allegations – and more to the point, evidence – of Ardaburius Iunior having incited the Persians to attack the Roman empire.[85] Ardaburius was dismissed and his accuser, Zeno, rewarded with the rank of *comes domesticus*. Not long afterwards the emperor Leo married his eldest daughter Ariadne to this newcomer Zeno.[86]

The Ardaburii had not lost all of their influence however – Aspar remained *magister militum praesentalis*. An impressive testament to Aspar's continuing power at court is that in *c.* 471, Aspar compelled Leo to marry his younger daughter, Leontia, to Aspar's son Fl. Iulius Patricius, and to declare Patricius Caesar, thus bypassing the husband of Leo's elder daughter Ariadne and her little son, Leo.[87] For the emperor Leo, this seems to have been the last straw, and later the same year, according to the *Chronicon Paschale*, Leo had Aspar and his two elder sons, Ardaburius and the Caesar Patricius, murdered in the palace.[88]

Yet, like the family of Anthemius, the power of the Ardaburii did not die with this severe disgrace.[89] Probably well before 471, Ardaburius' daughter Godisthea had been married to one Dagalaiphus, himself a member of an illustrious barbarian military family.[90] This marriage of Godisthea, daughter of Ardaburius, and Dagalaiphus, son of Areobindus, in turn produced a son, Fl. Areobindus Dagalaiphus Areobindus. This younger Areobindus, great-grandson of Aspar, made a quite spectacular marriage – to the Theodosian Anicia Iuliana. While the Theodosian house of the East had successfully but fatally shut itself off from the elites who surrounded them, the history of the western branch of the family was a different story. The last Theodosian emperor of the West, Valentinian III, had in 437 married Licinia Eudoxia, the only surviving child of Theodosius II.[91] This marriage had produced two female children and following the assassination of Valentinian III in 455, the empress and her daughters were carried off to North Africa by the Vandals. In 462, the empress and her younger daughter Placidia had been permitted to depart for Constantinople,[92] and there Placidia was married to the Roman aristocrat Olybrius, who was briefly western emperor in 472 before his death.[93] Anicia Iuliana was the only offspring of the marriage: descended from both the eastern and western branches of the imperial house, she represented the last of the surviving Theodosians, and it was with this imperial woman that the Ardaburii made a match at some point after 479.[94]

Iuliana's husband Areobindus served as *magister militum per Orientem* and led the Roman armies in a number of campaigns against Persia under the emperor Anastasius, being awarded the consulship in 506. In 512 riots against Anastasius would see a mob march to the house of Areobindus and Iuliana, demanding the general take the throne, though Areobindus had prudently already gone into hiding.[95] The son of Iuliana and Areobindus, Olybrius, had probably already been married by this point to Irene, the niece of the childless emperor Anastasius.[96] Like the Anthemii, the marriage alliances of the Ardaburii with imperial women over the course of the late fifth and early sixth centuries saw them maintain their influential role in eastern politics and, at times, come very close to claiming the throne.

Conclusion

The three families around whom this chapter is centred – the Theodosians, the Anthemii and the Ardaburii – can be found at the forefront of imperial politics in the East throughout much of the fifth century and even beyond. Between them, the Anthemii and Ardaburii ultimately outlived the eastern Theodosians, absorbed the remnants of the western Theodosians, and mingled with the new ruling houses of Leo, Zeno and Anastasius. Each family briefly reached imperial heights (the emperor Anthemius, the Caesar Patricius) and each experienced disgrace and humiliation (the murders of Aspar and his sons in 471, the failed usurpation of Fl. Marcianus in 479). Yet each family ultimately survived these disasters, and even prospered. Their stories contrast with the fate of the Theodosian house which, following the vows of a group of teenagers in 414, pursued an anti-alliance policy which spelled the disappearance of the dynasty.

In July 450 Theodosius II died after a fall from his horse.[97] The succession of Marcian one month later was influenced, in part at least, by the *magister militum* Aspar; the authority of his family would grow considerably under Marcian and his successor Leo I, while the *magister militum* Anthemius would in 453 be married to Marcian's daughter and in 467 raised by Leo as his western colleague. As the curtain went down on Theodosius II's life, these men stepped from the shadows into the limelight with both speed and success, suggesting that Jones' view that the military organisation of the East, with its five *magistri militum*, prevented the military establishment from dominating the government, should be treated with caution. From the death of Theodosius II in 450 and particularly from the 457 onwards, our sources record numerous internal military crises in East Roman politics, crises that hardly need presenting again here. Of course, imperial instability from the 450s onwards also reflected economic and religious factors, while other elite families were also involved in events; yet the dynamics of relations between the court and its military elites were a major factor.

It was in the very nature of Theodosius II's rule as a child-emperor who would never, even in adulthood, lead his armies that, however much his piety was presented as the key to military victories, his active military role was delegated to other men.[98] And, while civilian advisers such as the praetorian prefect

or *magister officiorum* were undoubtedly essential to the smooth transition from the rule of Arcadius to that of his son, the men who led the imperial armies upon the emperor's behalf would always be major government advisers as well. It is only late in Theodosius' reign that this begins to become more obvious, as the threat of war with Attila the Hun emerged across the course of the 430s and 440s, and generals such as Aspar and the Isaurian Zeno (not to be confused with the later emperor) were more conspicuously influencing government policy.[99] Indeed one source at least reports that, after a long unchallenged reign, Theodosius II did fear that the success Zeno had experienced in defending Constantinople from Attila would lead the general to revolt against him in the late 440s.[100] Yet, it is worth bearing in mind the considerable consolidation of power brought about by long-term Theodosian residence in Constantinople and the emperor's relationship with the population of the city: it would have taken a major revolt to dislodge Theodosius II, and arguably, as events ultimately indicate, his lack of provision for the future meant that the generals could simply await his demise.[101] The speed with which military men such as Aspar emerged to take up dominant positions in the government of Theodosius II's successor indicates that, despite the pious and civilian image of the court, military advisers were never far from the centre of power. Their loyalty, and the loyalty of their armies, remained key to the emperor's survival, however detached from the active leadership of the military he might be.[102]

The Theodosian anti-alliance policy could not, of course, prevent elite families around the throne from forming their own alliances – it could even be argued that it encouraged them more than ever to seek powerful allies among themselves once it was clear there was no chance of an imperial alliance. Military dynasties in the East were a new development of this period: both the Anthemii and the Ardaburii saw three generations of sons rise to the rank of *magister militum*, strengthening their positions through the continuity of their commands.[103] And while, as Jones suggests, multiple *magister militum* posts in the East may have made it more difficult for an individual general to dominate, the imperial house could not stop its *magistri militum* allying among themselves – as we see the Ardaburii in particular doing through marriage – and one dominant leader still emerging, as in the case of Aspar.[104] Ultimately, as the Theodosians died out, these military factions would dominate the course of eastern court politics for almost the next half century. It is significant that in their continued quest for influence and status in the late fifth century, both families sought – and achieved – marriages with imperial women.[105] It is also noteworthy that as soon as Theodosius II was dead, the imperial house's policy of non-alliance immediately ended, with the marriage of the Augusta Pulcheria to Marcian. It was not a policy which any future dynasty would adopt – imperial heirs were too rare to allow whole families of imperial women to choose virginity, whatever the potential problems their marriages might pose. The exclusion policy of the Theodosians protected the dynasty as long as it lasted; but it was a strategy which had failed to ensure the future stability of imperial rule, and this was recognised even in its own lifetime.

Notes

1 I am very grateful for the comments on this paper offered by Caillan Davenport, Shaun Tougher and John Haldon, and the anonymous reviewers. All remaining errors are my own. The research for this paper was conducted in part during my Summer Research Fellowship at Dumbarton Oaks in 2013, and in part during my Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main from 2013 to 2016, and I am deeply thankful for the opportunities these fellowships afforded.
2 Theodosius II was born on 10 April 401, and proclaimed Augustus on 10 January 402: see *PLRE* 2: 1100. He enjoyed an extraordinarily long reign, from his accession as a nine-month-old baby in 402, until his death following a horse-riding accident in 450.
3 E.g. Van Nuffelen 2013: 136–141; Harries 2013: 71.
4 Harries 2013: 71.
5 Valentinian I and his brother Valens ruled the empire from 364 to 375; when Valentinian I died he was succeeded by his sons Gratian and Valentinian II in the West. Theodosius II was acclaimed Augustus soon after the death of Valens and ruled alongside the two western Augusti.
6 On the domination of dynastic rule in the early principate see now Hekster 2015, and on the increasing emphasis on dynastic succession from the Constantinians in particular see most recently Börm 2015; see also McEvoy 2010: 157–158.
7 As Hekster 2015: 279–280, observes, the decision to ignore the claims of Constantine and Maxentius was 'astounding' – 'never before had near-relatives, let alone sons, been ignored when looking for succession to the Roman throne'. See also on the preference for imperial sons as successors Corcoran 2012: 4–5.
8 Errington 2006: 24–25, 37–42, and Lenski 2002: 30–32.
9 Burgess 1993/1994: 49.
10 Jones 1964: I.174.
11 *Not. Dig*. ch. 5–9; Jones 1964: I.174–175 and 178. See also Millar 2006: 45–46.
12 Jones 1964: I.178; see also now Lee 2013: 93.
13 Jones 1964: I. 178. Jones' explanation has been followed by later historians, see e.g. recently Lee 2013: 102; Kelly 2013a: 11. Exactly how the East and West emerged at this point with different military command organisations is not clear.
14 See below for Anthemius, and on Helion, *PLRE* 2: 533.
15 Although of course his co-Augustus in the West, Valentinian III, survived him as emperor and in that sense the need for a further 'heir' is disputable – for discussion see Burgess 1993/1994: 49, 63–64.
16 E.g. the elevations of Marcian in 450 and Leo in 457; the murder of Aspar and his sons in 471; the deposition of Zeno by Basiliscus in 475 and vice versa; the revolt of Fl. Marcianus in 479.
17 Thoroughly explored recently by Lee 2013: esp. 94ff.
18 I have been unable to find any cases prior to those of the Ardaburii and Anthemii of families which could boast three direct generations of *magistri militum*.
19 On which see McEvoy 2013: 29–30. On the military role of the emperor see also Chapter 9 by Frank Trombley and Shaun Tougher in this volume.
20 Fl. Ardaburius Aspar in particular has received attention (e.g. Scott 1976; Croke 2005, and now McEvoy 2016a), as has the western emperor Anthemius (e.g. O'Flynn 1991). For a general overview of the *magistri militum* of the later Roman empire and their family connections however, see Demandt 1970: 553–798.
21 As Priscus saw it: frag. 3.1 and 3.2 (Blockley 1983).
22 Theodosius' only known living relatives beyond his sisters were his uncle the western emperor Honorius and his aunt, Galla Placidia, both resident in far-off Italy. Procopius, *Wars* 1.2.1–10, reports a story of Arcadius having approached the Persian

king Yazdgard I (399–420) to act as guardian to his son, an interesting claim that does not however appear in any earlier source and modern scholars remained divided as to its veracity. For discussion see Holum 1982: 82–83. While legally we would expect the child Theodosius II to have been appointed a tutor until he came of age we have no record of the identity of this individual.

23 E.g. Sozomen 9.6.1; Theodoret 5.36.3. See also Millar 2006: 41; Szidat 2010: 391; Elton 2009: 142, and Lee 2013: 92. Holum argues for such an attempt by one Lucius, a pagan *magister militum* (on whom see Demandt 1970: 747), however the report appears only in the sixth century *Life of Isidore* by Damascius and is sensationalist in tone, describing the general entering the palace with sword drawn but withdrawing in terror upon finding the young emperor sheltered by a giant woman. The supposed attempt is undated and not reported in any other source. For discussion, see Holum 1982: 82.

24 For a full discussion of this phenomenon in the West in the same period, see McEvoy 2013.

25 For sources for Arcadius' life and reign, see *PLRE* 1: 99.

26 For a detailed study of these developments see McEvoy 2013. The lack of comparable writings from the eastern court to those of the poet Claudian who wrote during Honorius' youth in the West makes gaining a glimpse of the child-emperor Theodosius II and the presentation of his rule during his earliest years rather more difficult.

27 Croke 2010. The particular relationship between the emperor and the city and populace of Constantinople has been extensively explored recently by Flaig 1992: esp. 174–207; Diefenbach 1996: 35–37; Meier 2003: 144–145; Pfeilschifter 2013: 496, and also now Kaldellis 2015 generally and 137–138 especially.

28 On the background to Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, see now Gardiner 2013: 245–246. Generally on the picture of Theodosius II offered by Socrates and Sozomen, Harries 1994: 37.

29 Sozomen 9.1.

30 Socrates 7.22. See for discussion Holum 1982: 91–92. On the image of Theodosius generally presented in Socrates' writings in particular, see Gardiner 2013.

31 Harries 1994: 38, and McEvoy 2010: 164–168.

32 Socrates 7.22. See further Harries 1994: 39, and Kelly 2013b: 230.

33 Sozomen 9.1: ᾗ μοι δοκεῖ μάλιστα τὸν θεὸν ἐπιδεῖξαι μόνην εὐσέβειαν ἀρκεῖν πρὸς σωτηρίαν τοῖς βασιλεύουσιν, ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης μηδὲν εἶναι στρατεύματα καὶ βασιλέως ἰσχὺν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην παρασκευήν.

34 See similarly McEvoy 2013: 127–129, for Ambrose of Milan's reports on the piety of Gratian and Valentinian II.

35 For a full discussion see McEvoy 2013: esp. 127–129, 204–213, 268–272.

36 Although they did write about the years of Theodosius II's minority too, the dating of their texts is firmly attributed to the early 440s and their histories continued up to this point – for discussion see Gardiner 2013: 245 and n. 6.

37 For discussion see Harries 1994: 38, and Gardiner 2013: 249–251, who explores particularly the panegyrical aspects of Socrates' presentation of Theodosius II.

38 Sozomen 9.1.

39 As scholars have noted: Holum 1982: 94; similarly Holum 1977: 158, and Holum and Vikan 1979: 129. Also Cameron 1982: 271–272.

40 Holum 1982: 93–96. See most recently Kelly 2013a: 54, and Van Nuffelen 2013: 136.

41 Holum 1982: 143–144.

42 Sozomen 9.3: διὰ ταῦτα δὲ προφανῶς ἵλεω ὄντος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ αὐτῶν οἴκου ὑπερμαχοῦντος, τῷ μὲν κρατοῦντι τὰ τῆς ἡλικίας καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπεδίδου, πᾶσα δὲ ἐπιβουλὴ καὶ πόλεμος κατ'αὐτοῦ συνιστάμενος αὐτομάτως διελύετο. See for discussion Kelly 2013a: 45–46, 62. Also James 2001: 15.

43 In contrast to the West – for recent analysis see Van Nuffelen 2013.
44 As both Harries and Kelly have pointed out: Harries 2013: 88; similarly Kelly 2013a: 54. As Corcoran 2012: 15, has written, in relation to an earlier period: 'nervous emperors feared too many relatives, even as they wished for dynastic succession'.
45 *Chron. Pasch.* 414; Marcell. com. a. 414; cf. Holum 1982: 97; Harries 2013: 69.
46 Sozomen 9.1.56: ὑπεισελθοῦσα δὲ τὴν φροντίδα τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἄριστα καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ πολλῷ τὴν Ῥωμαίων οἰκουμένην διῴκησεν, εὖ βουλευομένη καὶ ἐν τάχει τὰ πρακτέα ἐπιτελοῦσα καὶ γράφουσα.

Cf. Philostorgius 12.7. A view widely accepted by scholars, in particular Holum 1982: 96, who claims that after 414 Pulcheria went on 'to reassert the Theodosian house as a political force'. As Kelly 2013a: 5, notes, traditional scholarship has portrayed Theodosius II as 'a hen-pecked monarch pushed around by his elder sister'.

47 See especially Harries 1994: 35–36, Elton 2009: 136–137, and Harries 2013: 72–73. For a suggestion that imperial women of Theodosius II's court did however wield more power than in earlier dynasties, if not perhaps as much as sometimes assumed, see Millar 2006: 195. Cf also James 2001: 66–68.
48 For sources on the life of Theodosius II's wife, Athenais/Eudocia, see *PLRE* 2: 408–409, and also Holum 1982: 112–146; Busch 2015: 136–165.
49 Eudocia's brothers, Valerius (*PLRE* 2: 1145) and Gessius (*PLRE* 2: 510–511), became consul in 432 and *magister officiorum*, and praetorian prefect of Illyricum, respectively.
50 On Eudocia's residency in Jerusalem and her activities there, see Holum 1982: 193–194, and Dirschlmayer 2015: 144–151.
51 On the marriage see Holum 1982: 183–184; McEvoy 2013: 256–257. The *PLRE* entry for Athenais/Eudocia suggests that she bore the emperor three children – two daughters and a son, of whom only one daughter, Licinia Eudoxia, survived. Evidence for the birth of a son (for whom the PLRE gives an entry – see Arcadius PLRE 2: 13) is limited – see Burgess 1993/1994: 49 n. 10 and Holum 1982: 178, n. 14.
52 See McEvoy 2013: 180, 213–214.
53 See McEvoy 2016b.
54 Socrates 7.22.
55 Socrates 7.42: Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς τοῖς ἀληθῶς ἱερωμένοις ἐφάμιλλος ἦν καὶ οὐδαμοῦ τοὺς διώκειν ἐθέλοντας ἀπεδέχετο.
56 As discussed by Kaegi 1968: 20, 23–24, regarding coins minted by Theodosius II at the time of Valentinian III's accession after the campaign of 425.
57 Priscus frag. 3.1 and 3.2. See further Lee 2013: 96; also in general Kelly 2013a: 6. Even Theodosius' father, the similarly unwarlike Arcadius, is attested as travelling outside Constantinople to meet an eastern army returning from the West in 395 (Zosimus 5.7.4–6), although this cannot have been a very pleasant experience since it led to his witnessing his praetorian prefect Rufinus' murder by the troops. Theodosius II's closest encounter with his military was presumably when he travelled to Thessalonica on the first part of the expedition to install Valentinian III as western emperor, but then abandoned his journey West due to ill health and returned to Constantinople, as Socrates 7.24.4 reports.
58 On Gainas' revolt, see especially Liebeschuetz 1990: 104–106, and Cameron et al. 1993: 199–233.
59 Athemius – *PLRE* 1: 696–697; also on his career, see Sidonius, *Panegyric II*, 94–102. Jones 1964: I.180; Holum 1982: 86–87; Harries 2013: 76
60 Socrates 7.1. He was a grandson of a praetorian prefect of Constantius II, Fl. Philippus. See further Jones 1964: I.179; Holum 1982: 88, and also on the extent of his influence, Millar 2006: 216–217.

61 Socrates 7.1: Φρονιμώτατος δὲ τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐδόκει καὶ ἦν, καὶ ἀβούλως ἔπραττεν οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ ἀνεκοινοῦτο πολλοῖς τῶν γνωρίμων περὶ τῶν πρακτέων. . .
62 *CTh* 15.1.51. See further on the background to the construction of the Theodosian walls: Meyer-Plath and Schneider 1943; Cameron 1982: 240–241; Holum 1982: 89.
63 Another such dominant civilian adviser was Helion, the *magister officiorum* who similarly had a very long tenure of office, from 414 until at least 427: *PLRE* 2: 533.
64 Holum 1982: 94–95, suggests the candidate for Pulcheria's hand was the grandson of Anthemius, Fl. Anthemius Isidorus Theophilus, but this cannot be proven.
65 As scholars such as Cameron 1982: 265–266, 271–272, Harries 2013: 72, and Van Nuffelen 2013: 136, have pointed out most recently. Holum 1982: 96, does concede that Anthemius may have simply died.
66 This Procopius (*PLRE* 2: 920) apparently claimed descent from the usurper of the same name in the 360s.
67 Demandt 1970: 777, notes Anthemius as *magister militum praesentalis* – *PLRE* however fails to include him on its list of magistri (*PLRE* 2: 1290) as Croke 2005: 150, points out.
68 Anthemius – *PLRE* 2: 96–98. On his marriage and military distinctions see Sidonius, *Panegyric II*, 193–204; Evagrius 2.16.
69 Sidonius, *Panegyric II*, 210–223. See further Croke 2005: 149–150; Clover 1978: 194; Heather 2005: 392–393.
70 On the establishment of Anthemius as western emperor, see Evagrius 2.16; Hydatius (230 [234]), p. 119; Hydatius (241 [247]), p. 121; Priscus, frag. 50 and 53.3 (Blockley 1983); Marcellinus *comes*, s.a. 467 (1); Malalas 14.35; Procopius, *Wars* 3.6.5–6.
71 Marcellinus com. s.a. 472 (2); Malalas 14.45; Theophanes AM 5957. Ricimer's loyalty to Anthemius had clearly not been won by his marriage in 467 to Anthemius' young daughter Alypia (Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.5).
72 Fl. Marcianus – *PLRE* 2: 717–718. See further on the marriage Malalas 14.46. Marcianus would later rebel against his brother-in-law Zeno, see Malchus, frag. 22 (Blockley 1983); Joh.Ant. fr. 211(3); Theophanes AM 5971. Cf. Jones 1964: I.227; Brooks 1893: 219–220.
73 Procopius Anthemius – *PLRE* 2: 99. On Herais – *PLRE* 2: 543. John of Antioch, frag. 308.26–33, mentions the marriage of Anthemius and Herais, and the birth of their son is described in the *Life of Daniel Stylite* 82. For Zeno son of Herais – *PLRE* 2: 1198.
74 Longina – *PLRE* 2: 686.
75 Fl. Ardabur – *PLRE* 2: 137–138.
76 On the western campaign of 424–425, see Kaegi 1968: 21–22; McEvoy 2013: 225–234. On Aspar – *PLRE* 2: 164–169. For a full description of his long career see Croke 2005.
77 Commemorated by the still extant Missorium of Aspar, on which see most recently Zaccagnino et al 2012. On the eastern government's involvement in North African campaigns in the 430s, see Blockley 1992: 60.
78 E.g. Bleeker 1980: 24–25; Holum 1982: 206–207; Zuckerman 1994: 164–172; Lee 2013: 103; Harries 2013: 71–72. For a different view of the military campaigns of the 440s, see Kelly 2008: 107–111.
79 Marcian – *PLRE* 2: 714–715.
80 See generally Burgess 1993–94: esp. 59–68. Burgess sees Aspar as playing a pivotal role (1993–94: 62–63), while Zuckermann 1994: 172, argues for a greater role for Fl. Zeno. Lee 2013: 95–96, also feels it is inconceivable Aspar did not have a role in the election. Also Jones 1964: I.218; Demandt 1970: 751. Both Malalas and the *Chronicon Paschale* mention Aspar as present at the deathbed of Theodosius II and alleged nomination of Marcian as his successor: Malalas 14.27; *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 450.

81 Whom Sozomen 7.17.4 describes as the most powerful man in the palace in the 420s.
82 Fl. Plinta – *PLRE* 2: 892–3; Theoderic Strabo – *PLRE* 2: 1073–1076. On the family's alliances, see Croke 2005: 152–153, and Demandt 1970: 771.
83 Ardabur iunior – *PLRE* 2: 135–137.
84 Leo I – *PLRE* 2: 663–664. E.g. for Aspar's support of his accession, Candidus, frag. 1 (Blockley 1983): Theophanes AM 5961; Priscus, frag. 61 (Blockley 1983). See further Croke 2005: 151–152.
85 *Life of Daniel Stylite* 55. On Zeno, later emperor, see *PLRE* 2: 1200–1202.
86 *Life of Daniel Stylite* 65; On the dating of Zeno and Ariadne's marriage, see Croke 2003: 560–563.
87 Since Leontia was born to the purple, she can have been no more than thirteen years of age in 470: Croke 2005: 192–193. On Patricius declared Caesar: Evagrius 2.16; Priscus, frag. 53.5 and 61 (Blockley 1983); Candidus, frag. 1 (Blockley 1983); Marcellinus com. s.a. 471; Theophanes AM 5961 and AM 5963.
88 *Chron. Pasch.* 467. Numerous other sources record the murders, though none in great detail: Evagrius 2.16; Priscus, frag. 53.5 and 61 (Blockley 1983); Candidus, frag. 1 (Blockley 1983).
89 Aspar's third son, Herminericus, was absent from Constantinople at the time of the murders, but survived and apparently prospered in the longer term: see *PLRE* 2: 549.
90 Dagalaiphus' father, the *magister militum* Fl. Areobindus, had shared the consulship with Aspar in 434: *PLRE* 2: 145–146.
91 See *PLRE* 2: 410–412, and on her betrothal and marriage particularly, McEvoy 2013: 256–257.
92 A number of sources report on the return to Constantinople of Eudoxia and Placidia, during the reign of Leo I: Procopius, *Wars* 3.5.6–7; Malalas 14.31 (who however dates their return to the reign of Marcian); Theophanes AM 5947 and AM 5949. See further Croke 2005: 159; and now also Croke 2014.
93 Olybrius – *PLRE* 2: 796–798. See also on Olybrius' career Clover, 1978, and generally on these connections Croke 2014: 100.
94 On the birth of Anicia Iuliana to Olybrius and Placidia: *Chron. Pasch.* 464; Malalas 14.31.
95 *Chron. Pasch.* 517. For a detailed account and analysis of the riots of 512, see Meier 2008.
96 Irene – *PLRE* 2: 626. See further on these connections between the families Croke 2014, and, going deeper into the sixth century, Cameron 1978.
97 *Chron. Pasch*. 450; Evagrius 1.22; Malalas 14.27; Theophanes AM5942.
98 In common with the western child-emperor courts of the period: for discussion, see McEvoy 2013: 321–324.
99 Millar 2006: 41–42. Kelly 2013a: 11, Harries 2013: 71–72, and Lee 2013: 103, all suggest that the lack of any great military victories on the part of the generals of Theodosius II, which would have led to their winning particular prestige and the personal loyalty of the army – at least until Zeno's successes in the late 440s – may have been a factor in making military usurpation less likely. On the emergence of the Huns as a problem for the East in the 440s, see Heather 2005: 306–312, and Kelly 2008: 92–113.
100 Priscus frag. 15.4.25–6 (Blockley 1983); see for discussion Lee 2013: 92, 103.
101 Although Theodosius II died in an accident, his family was not long-lived: both his father and uncle had died of natural causes in their late 30s, and his grandfather Theodosius I had died before the age of 50.
102 Lee explores in detail the means by which Theodosius II might keep his generals loyal, such as through the awarding of the patriciate and the consulate, as well as financial rewards: Lee 2013: 104–105, 107. Lee further makes the thought-provoking

argument that the fact that many of the high-ranking generals of Theodosius II's era were of non-orthodox faith ('Arians' – or even pagans) may have been a factor in preventing their aiming for the throne: Lee 2013: 108.

103 For the Anthemii: Procopius, Anthemius and Marcianus; for the Ardaburii: Ardabur, Aspar and Ardabur Iunior. Aspar's colleague as consul in 434, the *magister militum* Ariobindus, would have a grandson (the husband of Anicia Iuliana) who was also *magister militum*, and Plinta, the Gothic general with whom the Ardaburii were also allied, had a son Armatius (*PLRE* 2: 148) who was a *dux* or *comes*. See also Lee 2013: 101, who does not however include the Anthemii as a military dynasty.

104 The family alliances of the Ardaburii have been traced in particular by Demandt 1970: 771.

105 For the Anthemii: Anthemius and Euphemia in 453, Marcianus and Leontia in *c.* 471. For the Ardaburii: Patricius and Leontia in *c.* 470, Areobindus and Anicia Iuliana after 479.

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6

THE EMPEROR'S 'SIGNIFICANT OTHERS'

Alexios I Komnenos and his 'Pivot to the West'

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In this chapter, I shall use the term 'significant others' in two senses, one fairly specific, and the other more general. The specific sense is that of counsellors to the emperor who might account themselves 'Romans' yet who had special knowledge of other societies, political structures or regions, largely thanks to their own personal background and family contacts, rendering them liable to denunciation for their 'alien blood'. Such individuals might be prominent and politically influential, but most worked 'below the radar' of our narrative sources in posts such as translators and interpreters. The other, more general, sense of 'significant others', takes us into the sphere of ideology, court life and diplomatic exchanges – the role played by those whose sheer exoticism served to illustrate the empire's worldwide reach and its ability to subsume alien-looking styles of clothing, artistic motifs, manners and martial prowess within its order, and to orchestrate them in court culture and ceremonies. These 'others' – whether guardsmen, servants, attendants, or guests and 'friends' – drew their significance mainly from their unmistakeable 'otherness'.

A fairly dramatic occasion for this was 'the very hairy' (*polytrichon*) banquet held in the course of the all-important Christmas feasts. Judging by Philotheos' *Kletorologion*, this was attended mainly by outsiders in receipt of a *rhoga* (cash salary), each wearing 'his own ethnic garb' (*meta to ethnikon idion schema*) throughout the proceedings.[1] This assemblage of exotic specimens below the emperor's table was designed to stand out from the other banquets. However, many others were attended by title-holding notables from peripheral zones and by foreign ambassadors. Thus Liudprand of Cremona, himself carrying out an embassy for Otto the Great in 968, complained to his hosts about the superior place at table given to the Bulgarian ambassador, shaven-headed, 'unwashed' and wearing a bronze belt. He was unassuaged by their invocation of the terms of the Byzantine-Bulgarian marriage-alliance of 927, which had been written out and ratified by oath.[2] This incident illustrates the snares along with the advantages of the Byzantine leadership's flamboyant engagement with outsiders, while also bearing on the forementioned different senses of our 'significant

others'. Although symbolising worldwide dominion, this 'diplomacy of hospitality'[3] implicitly acknowledged the emperor's need incessantly to woo, placate, intimidate and – literally and figuratively – accommodate a kaleidoscopic array of persons, groupings and powers. Some ended up serving the emperor for life in an administrative or consultative capacity, if not in the armed forces, and their 'otherness' became gradually blurred, whether in their lifetime or that of their descendants. Other individuals or groups in the emperor's personal service remained conspicuously *sui generis*, acting as foils to the quintessential 'Roman-ness' of the emperor.

Without trying to investigate here the ways in which the emperor, his court and Constantinople visibly embodied 'Roman-ness', let alone trace the many shades of the term 'Roman',[4] one may simply proceed from the assumption that the outsiders' numbers fluctuated over time and note that one facet of the general easing of communications across the Mediterranean and overland between western and eastern Europe in the eleventh century was an increase in the number of outsiders who attained court titles by dint of service. This is registered, however tendentiously, in Kekaumenos' complaint about the bestowal of senior titles and commands on Franks and Varangians, an absurd innovation by his account.[5] Such sentiments, voiced by Kekaumenos in the 1070s, find a kind of counterpoint in a text dating from almost two generations later, the *Muses* (*Mousai*) of Alexios I Komnenos. These cautionary verses addressed to his son and heir, John II, are now thought to be advice literature written early in John's reign. They advocate, *inter alia*, the choice of young counsellors on grounds of merit, and not membership of a powerful family. The author may, as Gioacchino Strano suggests, have been discreetly urging John to uphold Alexios' readiness to make counsellors of outsiders to the political establishment, including those of barbarian origin.[6] And he could have been reaffirming the wisdom of a relatively 'open-door' policy in face of a backlash against Alexios' modus operandi.[7]

In light of all this, one may take a closer look at Alexios' dealings with one particular bloc of 'significant others', the Latins, who as individuals and political groupings jointly made up a sizeable portion of the Christian church. It seems to me that these dealings amount to something more than a series of *ad hoc* reactions, diplomatic opportunism and keen-eyed talent-spotting. Indeed, I would argue that they are of a piece with the stance of champion of religious correctness against deviance he struck against the likes of Basil the Bogomil, before the eyes of Constantinople's citizens. Playing the part of, in effect, 'witch-finder general' could further Alexios' quest for Christian consensus encompassing the West, besides showing care for his own subjects' devotions (see below).

Before amplifying these propositions, one may turn to the famous occasion when Alexios obliged the Norman invader of the Balkans, Bohemond, to sue for peace at Dyrrachium. The document Alexios had drafted to formulate the sworn undertakings Bohemond made to him ends with a list of witnesses attesting the terms of Bohemond's oath to uphold them, sworn before Alexios near Diabolis in 1108. The list consists almost entirely of names of Latin westerners. The Marquis

de la Force drew attention to this over eighty years ago, and there is still strength to his argument that Alexios stage-managed things carefully, lining up Latins and omitting Byzantine-born officeholders. It was not because of their offices that men were chosen to be signatories to the agreement: 'c'est leur naissance qui les a désignés', in the words of the Marquis de la Force.[8] He argued that Alexios devised this line-up in order to humiliate Bohemond, and he concluded that one could divide up the signatories into three distinct groups: leading members of Bohemond's family allied to Byzantium; a few 'Crusaders' now in the Byzantine camp; and 'the western lieutenants of the *basileus*'.[9] His characterisations seem largely to stand the test of time, even if more recent prosopographical work leaves room for doubt about some. For example, if William of Ghent (*Gelielmos ho Ganze*) and Geoffrey *Males* (Mailly?) are classifiable as 'Crusaders' in the sense of members of Bohemond's expedition,[10] this is hardly true of Paul 'the Roman' (*ho Rhomaios*).[11] And to number Richard of the Principate among the allies of the empire is to underplay the many-sided and elastic nature of a relationship encompassing Richard's avoidance of taking an oath to Alexios and a subsequent episode when Alexios ransomed him from Turkish captivity in 1103. Richard, a cousin and companion of Bohemond in 1097, could equally well count as a 'Crusader'.[12] Yet there is acumen in de la Force's observation that Alexios not only ritually rubbished Bohemond's reputation but also 'showed the men of the West the fortune that was awaiting them in Byzantium'.[13] Indeed, the title of his article – 'Les conseillers latins d'Alexis Comnène' – fits quite well with the concept of two types of 'significant others' who could on occasion conjoin to form the emperor's 'counsellors' (or *conseillers*). They were dignified symbols of Alexios' sprawling network of sympathisers and contacts, standing alongside persons of Latin stock yet now wholly in his service and able to brief him on their fellow-westerners' ways.

Two of the signatories to the agreement are described in such terms in Anna Komnene's account of the campaign of 1108. Marinus of Naples and the Frank Roger were, according to Anna, 'intelligent, and fully versed in the Latin customs'.[14] Marinus had been Duke of Naples a decade or so earlier, but had subsequently moved to Byzantium and was, by the time of Bohemond's siege of Dyrrachium, carrying out confidential missions for Alexios, together with valiant Franks like Roger.[15] So one may see in this episode a kind of tableau of what I have suggested about the dual role of the emperor's 'significant others': part 'backroom advisers', part symbols signifying his 'global' reach and thereby also a means of intimidating their own compatriots. Different as their roles usually were, both sets of 'significant others' bolstered imperial hegemony over foes, rivals, defiant regimes, and recalcitrant outsiders. None of Byzantium's adversaries disposed of anything like such a combination of the 'dignified and decorative' with lower-profile, yet well-informed, 'others'.

One may, then, view Alexios' stage-management of the witnesses to Bohemond's act of surrender as epitomising Middle Byzantine diplomacy: a tour de force carried out by a past-master in manipulating one group of barbarians against another and, at the same time, in adopting such of their skills as appeared

militarily useful. Indeed, Alexios' entire reign may be viewed from this perspective, an exercise in seeking military service from, indulging and even socialising with Latin westerners, while keeping them at arm's length and regarding them as ultimately expendable tools of state. In the past, I have taken this line of interpreting Alexios' policy towards westerners myself,[16] and the line could still be tenable. After all, Alexios was never impervious to *raisons d'état*, and there is no reason to doubt Anna's statement that he abandoned his march to relieve the Crusaders at Antioch for fear of losing Constantinople – and thus the empire itself – were he to persist.[17] For all the rhetoric of Christian solidarity and soldierly comradeship directed towards the West in search of military aid against the Turks, Alexios' attitude could be seen as, basically, letting 'dog-eat-dog'. Rumours to this effect were circulating among the Crusaders at the time of Ekkehard of Aura's passage through the Byzantine lands in 1101.[18] Without denying Alexios' hard-headedness as commander-in-chief and consequent readiness to sacrifice platoons so as to save the regiment, I think the oaths man-to-man that he exacted from leading westerners on their way to the East and on other occasions amounted to something more than expediency. Further, some of the relics he dispensed were carefully targeted declarations of saints' cults that eastern and western Christians shared in common, rather than routine doling-out of fragments of the True Cross. A certain sense of Christian collegiality seems to me at least as important for understanding Alexios' stance towards westerners as any coldblooded calculus of their military potential as enemies or allies, 'dogs' or decoys.

I would go so far as to suggest that Alexios was attempting to carry out a kind of 'Pivot to the West', showing particular regard for an alignment with the Roman papacy, but also having an eye to some sort of general concordat which might have gained ratification in a council involving all five patriarchates. The various westerners whom he marshalled to witness his agreement in 1108 were not simply an 'omnium gatherum' of 'significant others' to complete the humiliation of Bohemond. Alexios was also trying to make the agreement a symbolic affirmation of unity of purpose in pious military enterprises. This seems to me why the witness list begins with the names of western churchmen and 'pilgrims', starting with Maurus, a former abbot of the Amalfitan house of San Salvatore in Constantinople, but now archbishop of Amalfi. He attended in the capacity of papal legate and also served as, in effect, a notary: he wrote out the names of the western 'pilgrim' leaders, who merely made their marks.[19] In spelling all this out, the witness list itself conjures up an air of cooperativeness between them and the empire. This was not, in my opinion, simply a matter of Alexios grandstanding, or deftly papering over the cracks in his relationship with the papacy which pope Paschal II's connivance with – if not outright endorsement of – Bohemond's campaign against him threatened to widen.[20] In fact, Maurus would subsequently play a leading role in a diplomatic exchange about Church union between Alexios and Paschal.[21] And I would contend that serious hopes of lasting collaboration with the papacy and with western churchmen in general underlay Alexios' willingness, ten years earlier, to contemplate putting Bohemond

in charge of the lands beyond Antioch, holding the office of Domestic of the East, as John Pryor and Michael Jeffreys have suggested.[22] What is striking is that Bohemond's treachery and mishaps like the installation of Latin patriarchs in Antioch and Jerusalem did not make Alexios give up on the idea of a concordat with the papacy. Paradoxically, Bohemond's own propaganda in the early 1100s – blaming the First Crusaders' setbacks on sabotage by Alexios – only serves to illustrate something of which Alexios himself was keenly aware: the vulnerability of the communications-networks of any westerners installed in Syria and Palestine, and his ability to alleviate their problems.[23] As a student of logistics, Alexios could reckon that sooner or later they would have to look to him for supplies and military collaboration, however wayward and truculent some of their leaders might be. Indeed Bohemond's debacle at Dyrrachium in 1108 effectively confirmed the unviability of communications across the Byzantine lands without imperial sanction.

To make such claims for Alexios' vision of military and spiritual liaison between eastern and western Christendom is, I realise, bold, especially as it never came close to fruition. And all the more so in view of his studied ambiguity in word and gesture. His pointing to heaven with a smile on his deathbed prompted an outburst from Eirene Doukaina, according to Niketas Choniates: 'O my husband, in life you have excelled in all sorts of trickeries, ornamenting your language with contradictory meanings!'[24] So most of the rest of this chapter is devoted to two basic propositions about Alexios: that executing a 'Pivot to the West' was his persistent objective; and, second, that 'significant others' – in both senses of the term – were to play a key part in helping bring this about. Only occasionally do they surface in our narrative sources, as with the witness list of Alexios' 'conseillers latins', but just enough individuals are detectable to form a kind of pattern. This, when collated with some of his diplomatic initiatives, amounts to a vision of Christian consensus – an axis turning on the *basileus* and the Roman papacy, driven on by monks. These 'significant others' seem to me to differ in kind from their predecessors: they were no longer simply a back-channel to alien societies, additional means of dominating or withstanding them.

A couple of obvious objections arise: that long before Alexios' time, in-depth studies of barbarians ranging beyond their specifically military skills were carried out with the help of counsellors of more or less alien descent; and, second, members of the governing elite were already taking stock of sociocultural change in the Latin West before Alexios mounted the throne, and so one cannot credit him with a 'step-change'. There are, undeniably, hints of such studies together with appreciation of alien cultures in our extant sources. Some may plausibly be linked with the pedigrees of high-profile counsellors or lowlier translators and other officials. Such study is, after all, implicit in the sixth-century *Dialogue on Political Science*. This not only praises the martial qualities of the Franks but also represents individuals 'from barbarian lands' as having moral fibre to contribute to the body politic: if, when running a private estate, one appoints the best managers,

'how much more necessary would it be for the state?' *Optimates*, of Roman and non-Roman origin, should be appointed for their personal qualities and govern with common sense, even while imperial rule aspires to the divine.[25] And, at a lowlier level, we have hints of translators who were not merely knowledgeable about their homeland as native-speakers but overtly well-disposed towards the leadership there. This is apparent from, for example, the gloss on the Abbasid caliph's name added by an Arabic translator in Romanos I Lekapenos' service. Translating a letter to ar-Rāḍī, he wished the caliph blessings: 'peace upon the caliph; may God prolong his life and help him!'[26] A generation earlier, Leo VI showed in his *Taktika* a degree of general knowledge about the Muslims' beliefs and standing commitment to jihad.[27] One suspects that the Arab eunuch Samonas' ability to brief Leo on the Muslim *mentalité* went some way to earn him the emperor's favour, and promotion to the office of *parakoimomenos*. Samonas' – and indeed Leo's – knowledge would have benefited from his apparent ability to keep in touch with his father. The latter led an embassy from the Muslims of Tarsus to Constantinople, and Samonas allegedly urged him to return home and keep to the Islamic faith, pledging to join him.[28]

Suggestive as these hints may be, they are essentially a matter of 'learning from the enemy', to borrow Constantine Zuckerman's evocative title for his thesis that Constans II adopted the method of levying a poll-tax which the Arabs imposed on the lands they conquered in the mid-seventh century.[29] Emperors may have taken closer interest in outsiders' mores and beliefs than 'Establishment' narratives and orations are inclined to acknowledge, some doing so more attentively than others. But they did so with an eye to maintaining imperial hegemony, scrutinising other peoples the better to have the upper hand over them. Leo VI's outlining of the Muslims' commitment to jihad was, after all, designed to arouse similar devotion to God and the war-effort among Christians, and eventually gain victory.[30] The same probably goes for the presence in imperial circles in the 850s and 860s of influential counsellors having personal experience of, if not blood-ties to, Slavs, Bulgars or other northern peoples. Linguistic competence or inside knowledge about these peoples was at a premium at a time when the Bulgar khan was contemplating baptism while tightening hold over his *Sklaviniai*, Judaism was gaining ground among the Khazar elite, and a new power was forming north of the steppes, the Rus.[31] The career-paths of Constantine-Cyril and Methodios,[32] the *parakoimomenos* Damianos,[33] the 'Khazar-face' Photios,[34] and Basil 'the Macedonian'[35] all owed something to their 'significant otherness' and, in the case of Cyril and Methodios, to zeal for instilling the faith in fellow-Slavic-speakers. But here, too, it was ultimately a matter of geopolitics – of maintaining imperial hegemony in a kind of 'game of thrones', countering Frankish expansion into Pannonia and the Balkans, and resorting to cultural tools, such as vernacular languages, as a means of thwarting them. One of the most compelling statements of the role of the true Christian ruler and, ultimately, the emperor in guaranteeing morality, justice and order comes in a sermon Methodios addressed to the Moravian prince Svatopluk, writing in Slavonic.[36]

A second objection to our claim that Alexios Komnenos' 'conseillers latins' were in a class apart from earlier emperors' 'significant others' is that members of the ruling elite were taking stock of sociocultural and material changes in the Latin West before his reign, and seeking to engage 'significant others' from there. Undoubtedly, emperors began to show interest in westerners and even western culture virtually from the time that overland communications eased with the annexation of Bulgaria in 1018. According to Michael Psellos, Romanos III Argyros was schooled in Latin as well as Greek letters, and he tried to emulate emperors such as 'the most accomplished philosopher, Marcus [Aurelius]' and Augustus, presumably reading the former's *Meditations* in their original Greek.[37] Perhaps Romanos learnt Latin for juristic purposes before mounting the throne, rather than from broader cultural ambitions.[38] But one of his successors took a sustained interest in westerners, if not in western customs, besides systematising legal studies in Constantinople. Constantine IX Monomachos gave individual Normans senior military commands within a few years of enlisting significant numbers of them in his forces[39] and, famously, he assumed a mediating role between his own patriarch and cardinal Humbert around the time of their exchange of excommunications in Hagia Sophia.[40] Indeed, the drive by Michael Keroularios and Leo of Ochrid against Latin malpractices[41] was prompted partly by the emperor's grooming of the Italian-born Argyrus for a senior command. The latter frequented the Great Palace in the later 1040s, encountering senior churchmen, and his defence of the use of unleavened bread led to him being refused communion by Keroularios.[42] Argyrus was, in 1051, appointed *Doux* of the entire southern Italian dominions and Sicily. He owed his posting at least partly to his observance of Latin religious rites and his good relations with the papal curia, qualities unpalatable to Keroularios.[43] Constantine probably saw in him a counsellor about western affairs as well as a capable general and potential go-between with the papacy. To that extent, their interrelationship foreshadowed Alexios' with his 'significant others'. Indeed, certain members of the later eleventh-century governing elite showed awareness of the lore, modes of governance and history of the contemporary West, besides keen interest in ancient Rome. Michael Attaleiates exemplifies the trend, as Dimitris Krallis' studies have shown.[44] But neither Attaleiates nor other secular commentators have much to say about religious issues, let alone offering an overview of East–West relations with an ecclesiastical as well as a military dimension.[45] Indeed, if Argyrus with his dual identity was a kind of forerunner, the disruption and charges of disloyalty his employment evoked from populists like Keroularios served warning on emperors to go carefully in attempting rapprochement with the papacy and in choosing any more 'significant others' from the West. In short, for all these straws in the wind there are no real precursors to Alexios' 'conseillers latins'. These were, I believe, components in the 'Pivot to the West' he envisaged, an attempt at learning from outsiders with an eye to ecclesiastical concord and military collaboration, rather than simply to gaining the upper hand over them.

This takes us back to Alexios' vision of military and spiritual liaison between eastern and western Christendom. Although never articulated fully, hopes for a consensus recur in his letters to the papacy and other western spiritual leaders. Thus in his letters to abbot Oderisius of Monte Cassino Alexios refers to the Crusaders as 'pilgrims', remarks on their setting forth with good intentions, and even calls their dead 'blessed'.[46] Alexios persisted with conciliatory demarches to the papacy, notwithstanding such episodes as Bohemond's attempt to 'hijack' the Crusading impulses of westerners. Bohemond was, as Alexios knew both from his abortive Domesticate of the East and his subsequent difficulties in holding Antioch, an outsize phenomenon, yet with dwindling material assets. This renders less surprising his alacrity in resuming negotiations with pope Paschal upon the failure of Bohemond's expedition to Dyrrachium. And, as noted above, the papal legate Maurus, archbishop of Amalfi, loomed large in the witness list drawn up in 1108, whatever his precise brief from Paschal may have been. Alexios was flagging up the role of the legate and his master as guarantors of the sworn terms of the treaty. Several further demarches to the papacy followed, the last being the despatch of an embassy in 1117, most probably proposing church union to Paschal, after he had been driven from Rome by unruly citizens and the arrival of his old enemy, emperor Henry V.[47] Texts drafted under Alexios' auspices speak of the 'catholic church', a broad term dear to pope Urban II, albeit with rather different connotations.[48] In 1089 the imperial protocol of the *Synodos Endemousa*'s ruling on relations with the papacy referred in pointed yet constructive style to the church of Rome as having 'long ago' been joined in 'one community' with 'our most holy and catholic church'; then, 'together with the other most holy patriarchs, the Roman pope himself had been inscribed in the holy diptychs'.[49] Over twenty years later, Alexios' envoy informed the pope of the emperor's readiness to restore what he seemingly termed 'catholic church unity' (*catholicae ecclesiae unitatem*; *catholicae unitatis*).[50] Intimations of a church regulated through councils, involving joint-action between patriarchates of the Pentarchy, are not just tropes of imperial rhetoric. For example, the letter patriarch Nicholas III sent to Urban II after the synod in 1089 treats him as of equal rank with the other patriarchs, and asks him to send his profession of faith, in accordance with ancient tradition.[51] The patriarch of Antioch was at this synod, and it was not unknown for the patriarch of Jerusalem to attend synods in Constantinople, too. Thus patriarch Symeon presided alongside the Constantinopolitan patriarch, Isaac Komnenos and Alexios himself over the synod held in Blachernai in, probably, late 1094.[52] Here, I suggest, were 'nuts and bolts' of the Pentarchy as an institution for church governance, working together under the imperial aegis. And it may be no accident that it was to a church council that Alexios directed an embassy just a few weeks after the Blachernai synod. This council met at Piacenza at the beginning of March 1095. The embassy sought help from 'all true Christians' to drive back the 'heathen'; the latter had 'almost destroyed' the 'Holy Church' 'in those parts' and now were besetting Constantinople itself.[53]

These demarches show good timing. Alexios was repeatedly raising issues of church union at points when the pope's fortunes were at a low ebb and the German emperor's supporters were threatening, or occupying, Rome. And the references to both 'catholic church' and ancient traditions chime in with the emphasis Urban himself placed, in his correspondence, on the 'restoration' of true religion and the church worldwide.[54] One might dismiss this as just an example of intelligence put to good use by Alexios, essentially rhetoric fashioned to arouse the Latins, while leaving the overall structure of the church unclear. This would be in line with a thirteenth-century Byzantine chronicle's depiction of Alexios playing 'the Jerusalem card', exploiting western indignation at the Muslims' possession of the Holy Sepulchre to induce many people to head east and liberate it.[55] However, one should allow for the possibility that Alexios' rhetoric was informed by a more comprehensive vision of lasting liaison between eastern and western Christians.

Two sets of considerations in support of this possibility are worth outlining. The first of these are the plans Alexios laid for an expedition involving Latins, Antioch and Jerusalem in the years before the First Crusade. The prominence of the patriarch of Jerusalem, Symeon, at the Synod of Blachernai has already been noted. It was probably around this time that he wrote a tract on azymes, couching it in fairly moderate tones, even while ultimately rejecting azymes as unsound. Symeon's reasons for writing the tract are unknown. But its irenic tone fits well enough with the content of two letters sent in his name during the siege of Antioch, one issued jointly with Adhémar of Le Puy and the other with 'Greek and Latin bishops together with the entire army of the Lord and the church'. They urge westerners to come to the Crusaders' aid.[56] Meanwhile the convenor of the Blachernai Synod, Alexios Komnenos, seems to have been taking steps to install churchmen not inherently unsympathetic to the Latins in Antioch. One such was probably John Italos who, as Paul Magdalino has suggested, may have been appointed *chartophylax* to the patriarch. As Magdalino observes, Italos was of South Italian origin, and thus well-equipped to cope with such Romance-speakers as he might have to deal with in Antioch.[57] The scenario of Alexios trying to prepare the ground for the arrival of western warriors gains focus from a work of Judith Ryder. She shows that the patriarch Alexios appointed to Antioch, John the Oxite, was on amicable terms with him; and although he later wrote a tract against azymes, he does not seem to have been ill-disposed towards Latin Christians upon their arrival in Antioch.[58] His presence as patriarch at holy communion conducted by Latin priests served to symbolise Christian fellowship, even if he subsequently described their rites unflatteringly.[59] Indeed, he had already come under suspicion of more than fellowship from the Turks: they had hung him on ropes from the city walls before the Crusaders' eyes, presumably suspecting him of treachery.[60]

The assignment to the patriarchal see of a courageous churchman not ill-disposed towards Latins would have been apt if, already around 1090, Alexios were contemplating means of regaining Antioch with western military aid and, perhaps, of shielding it with castles and fortresses garrisoned by Franks in the

territories to the East. One cannot be sure that already, before the First Crusade, Alexios envisaged casting Bohemond in this role. But he can hardly have ruled out the possibility of Bohemond joining in the response to the scattergun appeals for help against the Muslims. He would have known, through his contacts with Bohemond's uncle, Roger of Sicily, about Bohemond's parlous position in Apulia. And the post he probably offered him in 1097 – the Domesticate of the East reaching to the Euphrates towns – was calculated to enrich him as well as to preoccupy him with fighting off the Turks.[61]

Setting this speculation aside, one may at least be confident that appeals for help were being sent to the West in the earlier 1090s, by Alexios himself as well as patriarch Symeon. There are no serious grounds for doubting the statement of the text written a decade or so later in Cormery that Alexios had 'everywhere' sent 'letters, heavy with lamentation and full of weeping, begging with tears for the aid of the entire Christian people and promising very generous rewards to those who would give help'.[62] If one follows the text, Alexios had already raised 'a multitude' of companies 'with God's favour' by the time his envoys appealed for more help at Piacenza.[63] The tone of these letters was in key with the 'catholic' language of communications with the papacy. But in effect Alexios was appealing over the pope's head to a much wider, arms-bearing constituency, who might act without waiting upon the pope's assent.

These, then, are hints from the half-decade or so before the Council of Piacenza of plans which, had the Crusade gone more smoothly, might have seen companies of westerners installed from the Euphrates to the Holy Land, and politically sympathetic eastern-rite patriarchs ensconced in Antioch and Jerusalem. They seem to convey outlines of a vision, yet also practical building-blocks for the revival of the Pentarchy, looking back to the early Church by which Urban II set such store; they entail some sort of Christian consensus, with an honourable yet far from commanding role for the papacy.

Our second set of considerations pointing towards Alexios' vision of Christian liaison relates to events and texts dating from after the turn of events put paid to hopes of immediate consensus. Without trying to substantiate them in full, one may note that Alexios' rhetoric and concern about doctrine were as much for domestic as foreign consumption, and that some form of union accommodating differences in ritual, if not doctrine, was still on his agenda around 1112. It was then that he presided over disputations between a former archbishop of Milan, Pietro Grossolano, and Byzantine churchmen. Several of these disputations concerned the *filioque* clause.[64] Whether or not Alexios really complimented Grossolano on his presentation, this was a highly public event, held before senate and synod, and spawning texts from the Byzantine side.[65] A defence of eastern teaching on the *filioque* was even propounded by 'the most intelligent emperor Alexios', if we accept one manuscript reading. The manuscript in question contains not the forementioned texts, but a version of the *Armoury of Doctrine*.[66] This vast encyclopaedia of heresies may still have been in preparation at the time of the disputations with Grossolano, but Alexios had put Euthymios Zingabenos to

work on it several years earlier; thus it gives us a picture of his priorities in the early 1100s. As I have argued elsewhere, the *Armoury* projects Alexios as a kind of 'witch-finder general', trapping and punishing the Bogomil leader Basil.[67] Its portrayal of Alexios' valiant orthodoxy serves as a distraction from politically sensitive topics such as azymes and the *filioque* clause. In fact the latter receives cursory treatment, and is consigned to the distant past.[68] The Bogomils' Dualism, in contrast, is denounced at length as a recent heresy which the emperor himself is now eradicating. The only 'heresy' more recent is that of the Saracens![69]

To treat Islam as highly topical may seem anomalous. But it would make sense if action against Muslims were underway, as it was against the Bogomils. So, too, would downplaying ritual or doctrinal differences with the Latins, if they were to be comrades-in-arms against the Muslims on a long-term basis. In other words, Alexios was – by means of Euthymios' *Armoury* – projecting his vision of East–West consensus with an array of arguments drawn from the early Church Fathers. Alexios could not wish away the *filioque* clause altogether, as his personal intervention in the Grossolano debates shows. This was the one obstacle to mutual acceptance, according to the survey of Latin errors written by Alexios' former encomiast, Theophylact of Ochrid, probably around 1112.[70] Theophylact objected to any one 'throne', however 'lofty' it might consider itself, tampering with doctrine, for this contravened 'the faith of the Fathers' and 'ancient traditions', and shook 'the foundations of the church'.[71] If his implication is that only a universal council might authorise the revision of doctrine, this would accord with themes in texts emanating from Alexios, blandly yet purposively citing the ancient church's functioning for ultimate authority, as against the papal invocation of St. Peter.

These considerations seem to me to justify talk of Alexios pursuing a 'Pivot to the West' consistently, for all the setbacks in his relations with individual Crusade leaders and churchmen. Alexios pursued it, I suggest, not just with political intelligence to facilitate the timing of his demarches and familiarity with western parlance and religious rites, but with knowledge-in-depth and understanding. And it was here that 'significant others' could provide invaluable information and advice. Among them were not only the 'conseillers latins' he paraded at Dyrrachium in 1108, but also (and probably still more important), counsellors too obscure to feature in our narrative sources and anyway not to the taste of Anna Komnene – low-ranking priests and monks.

Alexios' relations with western monks make a fitting conclusion, for they seem in a class apart from the 'significant others' whom previous emperors had maintained, thus constituting the 'step-change' mentioned earlier. Alexios' predisposition in favour of eastern monks is well-known, as is the quasi-monastic regimen that his mother instituted at court in the earlier years of his reign.[72] But his patronage and sympathy for asceticism extended to western monks, too, and characteristically, his piety was alloyed with statecraft. Through maintaining monks at and near his court, Alexios implicated himself in a social network that involved their kinsmen, seigneurial patrons and household knights back in the West.



Figure 6.1 Patriarchates in the East and monastic points of contact in the West in the era of Alexios I Komnenos' 'Pivot'

The general mutual esteem of eastern and western monks overrode the sectarian and ritual differences that irked some senior churchmen and ascetic fundamentalists. And in a variety of ways the wealth of large monasteries helped underwrite the outlay of arms-bearers intent on pious expeditions to the East, as Jonathan Riley-Smith has shown in his study of the funding of the First Crusade.[73]

To summarise, Alexios maintained at court a floating population of Latin 'significant others', some of them monks, some laymen but already closely linked with monasteries or themselves contemplating tonsure: there was steady circulation of individuals between Constantinople and the West. I shall do little more than list instances of this network, starting with the encounter around 1090 between the monk Joseph of Canterbury and old friends who were now in 'the emperor's household' (*familia imperatoris*). Whether themselves monks or guardsmen,

these now had access to senior personnel and presumably, on occasion, to Alexios himself. One of them, acting as interpreter, seems to have persuaded the officer responsible for guarding the relics 'in the emperor's chapel' to let Joseph have a fragment of the relics of St. Andrew. This Joseph wanted to donate to the cathedral in Rochester, which was dedicated to the saint.[74] Such contacts enabled Alexios to target his gifts of relics carefully, as with that of the arm of St. John Chrysostom to St. Mary's at Abingdon. This seems to have flattered its abbot, Faritius, a bibliophile and noted physician.[75] And the Benedictine monastery Alexios founded in memory of Peter the Hermit's pilgrims at Civetot knitted him into the web of what was still, around 1100, the most revered house in western Europe, Cluny: he entrusted the monastery to Cluny's leading priory, La Charité-sur-Loire.[76] The influential head of this priory in the earlier twelfth century, Odo Arpin, had spent long enough in the emperor's company to be known as 'a warrior (*miles*) of the emperor of the Greeks' to Albert of Aachen, being ransomed by Alexios some time after his capture at the battle of Ramla. It was perhaps whilst back at Alexios' court that Odo decided to become a monk. At any rate he paid a visit to pope Paschal in Rome to consult him and, presumably, also to sing Alexios' praises.[77] His subsequent post at La Charité-sur-Loire will have given him cause to communicate with Alexios from time to time, perhaps sending monks to his house's dependency in Civetot. Likewise with another, longer-term, habitué of the emperor's *familia*, by the name of Gausbert, who ended up holding the senior office of 'pantler' (*panetarius*) at the foremost monastery on the Lower Loire, Marmoutier. He, too, seems to have decided on the monastic life while in the imperial household, and to have remained well-disposed towards Alexios after his return to the Loire Valley. He was closely attached to a leading magnate and patron of Marmoutier, Stephen of Blois. He urged Stephen to be generous with his donations and, probably, encouraged him to join in the great expedition to help fellow-Christians in the East.[78] The welcome Stephen received from Alexios, who behaved to him 'like . . . a father' according to Stephen's letter to his wife, may well reflect the vitality of ties between the emperor, former denizens of his court, and western grandees.[79] 'Significant others' could create a sense of 'family'.

They could also, in the case of Alexios, deepen his understanding of westerners' spiritual expectations, so that he could lay on disputations of the sort that Pietro Grossolamo was familiar with from the schools of Pavia and Bologna, or, some twenty years earlier, put westerners' personal loyalty to Christ and yearning for relics to military effect while maintaining a sense of 'pilgrimage'. The names of the 'significant others' who were, I believe, responsible for all this are largely unknown. But one more deserves a place on the list: Guillaume, the brother of Gausbert. He, too, stayed in the emperor's household for several years; but, unlike his brother, Guillaume was already a monk, having been tonsured at Cormery. He was cherished by Alexios for his intellect, loyalty, organisational skills and piety, if one believes 'the Cormery text'.[80] One suspects that Guillaume had a hand in the composition and targeting of the 'letters, heavy with lamentation' that Alexios sent to the West in the early 1090s (as mentioned earlier). What is certain is that

Guillaume's appetite for relics was shared by his former brethren in Cormery, to whom he ceremonially donated many relics in the summer of 1103.[81] And the most striking feature of the list explaining how St. James the Persian's head and other treasures came to be in Cormery is, besides enthusiasm for Alexios, its assumption of common Christian values and models of piety, reaching back to antiquity. The abbot in Nicomedia who, long ago, had acquired the head from Persia had been 'of marvellous sanctity', and so was his successor around 1094, when Guillaume was put in charge of repair-works there after the Turks had been driven out. Guillaume did what he could to restore the monastery and 'the holy man [i.e. the abbot], observing his . . . integrity, disclosed to the faithful man . . . the holy things deposited there'. 'At the pleading of many of his own monks', he eventually gave a large number of the relics to Guillaume.[82]

Here, I suggest, are building-blocks of the consensus Alexios tried to create with the help of 'significant others' – in fact, 'partners' in the modern sense of the term. To the objection that the sort of piety under discussion is essentially monastic and restricted to cults and asceticism, one may reply that for many laypersons as well as clerics this *was* the essential means of attaining the holy, and individual salvation. Influential nobles could take the tonsure, as Gausbert and Odo Arpin did, or simply take advice and loans from monasteries, as Stephen of Blois and many other Crusaders did. One should note that Marmoutier, of which Gausbert became pantler, has been singled out as 'outstanding' among the three monasteries preeminent both as financiers of and beneficiaries from the Crusaders' efforts to raise and fund companies. It seems to have been 'an important centre for Crusaders'.[83] In consorting with monks and warriors intent on fighting for 'Holy Church', Alexios was, in effect, sidestepping the squabbles between Church hierarchs of East and West. In much the same vein, his letters 'heavy with tears' appealed over hierarchs' heads to western notables in the 1090s. Putting pressure on the pope and his curia in this way might seem an odd way to reach consensus, but Alexios could hope that their disputes with the German emperor would eventually lead them to look favourably on the idea of a united Roman empire under a ruler far away in Constantinople, a policy that his envoys seemingly urged upon the citizens of Rome in 1117.[84] And there was a reputable precedent for the sort of Christian consensus he envisaged, the Pentarchy which features as a leitmotif in Constantinopolitan correspondence with the papacy. Alexios' vision did not come to fruition, and in the 1130s the monastery he founded at Civetot was suffering from neglect, contacts with La Charité-sur-Loire having lapsed. But Alexios' idea of amassing 'significant others' from the West and his belief that a Christian partnership was desirable and, indeed, pleasing to God lived on – in the form of his grandson, Manuel Komnenos.[85]

Notes

1 Ed. Oikonomidès 1972: 176–179.
2 Liudprand, *Legatio* 19.
3 Shepard 1992: 61.

4 For a sense of 'Roman' that could encompass anyone 'professing an orthodox way of life, whether they are from the east, from Alexandria, or from elsewhere', but gave overriding priority to those from the 'queen of cities', see Theodore Balsamon, *Answers to Questions of Patriarch Mark of Alexandria*, ed. Rhalles and Potles 1852–1859, vol. 4: 451; Magdalino 1991 [1992]: 187–188. On the variant shades, see also e.g. Kaldellis 2007; Page 2008; Stouraitis 2012: 260–264.

5 Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*, ed. Litavrin 2003: 296–297, trans. Roueché 2013: 95.28–96.02.

6 Maas 1913: 351.72–89; Strano 2013: 447–451. See also Mullett 2012: 197–199, 209.

7 Strano 2013: 449–450.

8 Marquis de la Force 1936: 154.

9 Marquis de la Force 1936: 163.

10 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.12.28, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 423; Riley-Smith 1997: 241, 239. See also *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) William 103, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/162036>; Joffroy 101, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/162037>.

11 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.12.28, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 423. It seems that nothing can be said of Paul, beyond that he 'was probably from Rome': *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Paulos 127, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/162039>.

12 Beech 1993: 29–30, 33–35, 36–38; Riley-Smith 1997: 101, 220, 240; *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Richard 4001, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/156415>.

13 Marquis de la Force 1936: 164.

14 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.9.1, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 407–408.

15 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.4.4, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 395. See von Falkenhausen 2010: 41; *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Marinos 101, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/107783>; Roger 15002, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/156751>.

16 Shepard 1988: 112–116.

17 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 11.6.4, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 339.

18 *Frutolfi et Ekkehardi Chronica*, ed. and trans. Schmale and Schmale-Ott 1972: 166.

19 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.12.28, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 423. On Maurus' lengthy stay in Constantinople (and probable familiarity with Alexios), see von Falkenhausen 2010: 43–44; *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Mauros 106, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/162042>.

20 On the question of Paschal's understanding of, and support for, the expedition, see Rowe 1966: 196–197, 200–202; Laiou 2005: 18; Flori 2007: 261–267, 276–277.

21 Bayer 2002: 197–198; von Falkenhausen 2010: 43–44; *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Mauros 106, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/162042>.

22 Pryor and Jeffreys 2012: 39–40, 64, 76–78.

23 Alexios' exploitation of logistics is illustrated by, for example, his blockade of Bohemond's forces at Dyrrachium in 1108, as expounded by Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 13.8.5–6, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 406–407.

24 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, Reign of John Komnenos, ed. van Dieten 1975: 7.66–68; Malamut 2007: 442.

25 *Dialogue on Political Science*, trans. Bell 2009: 134–135, 152, 155–156. The Franks are here termed 'Gauls'. For this reference, and stimulating suggestions, I am most grateful to Professor Frands Herschend of Uppsala University.

26 Hamidullah 1960: 287. See Kresten 1998: 159–160 n.63.

27 Leo VI, *Taktika* 18.105, 18.117–130, ed. trans. Dennis 2014: 476–477, 480–487; Dagron 1983: 220–224.

28 Theophanes Continuatus 6.28 (Reign of Leo VI), ed. Bekker 1838: 374–375; Georgius Monachus Continuatus, Reign of Leo VI 40, ed. Bekker 1838: 868. On Samonas and the suspicions aroused by his familiarity with the Muslim world, see Jenkins 1948: 225–228, 230–233; Tougher 1997: 197–198, 208–210, 214–215; *PmbZ* #26973.
29 Zuckerman 2005: 83–84; see also Jankowiak 2013: 299 n.276.
30 Leo VI, *Taktika* 18.123–127, ed. trans. Dennis 2014: 482–485; Dagron 1983: 229–230, 237–239. See also Riedel 2010.
31 Shepard 1998: 172–175, 176–180.
32 *PmbZ* #3927; *PmbZ* #4975.
33 *PmbZ* #1212.
34 *PmbZ* #6253; Shepard 2017.
35 The association made in early sources between the young Basil and the world of Bulgars and Slavophones was pointed out by Kislinger 1981: 147–150. The implications of this await further exploration. See *PmbZ* #832.
36 Zástěrová 1983: 694–699; Shepard 2012: 362–363.
37 Michael Psellos, *Chronographia* 3.2.
38 As suggested by Oikonomidès 1999: 10.
39 Shepard 1993: 287–288.
40 Ed. Will 1861: 150–152; Runciman 1955: 58–61; Bayer 2002: 87, 92–94, 98.
41 On Leo's role, see Büttner 2007: 31, 34, 50–51.
42 Ed. Will 1861: 177, col. A, lines 30–35; 175, col. A, lines 9–10.
43 Von Falkenhausen 1982: 122–123; von Falkenhausen 2010: 35.
44 See Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 24.1, and 27.7–12, ed. Bekker 1853: 193–195, 217–221, trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 352–355, 396–403. See Krallis 2009; Krallis 2012: 52–62, 67–69, 192–199, 233–234. On the vitality of legal studies in eleventh-century Byzantium, which could have sparked interest in Latin texts amongst others besides Romanos Argyros, see Krallis 2009: 50–51, and also now Penna 2014: 401–403, 426–427.
45 In so far as Attaleiates attends to divine agency, he appears to observe conventions, while viewing piety and high-mindedness essentially in terms of benefit to the Roman state, without strongly Christian connotations: Krallis 2012: 181–184, 187–189, 194–195, 200–205. On our lack of an ecclesiastical narrative from the Byzantine vantage-point, see Cheynet 2007.
46 Ed. Hagenmeyer 1901: 141, 153. See also Hagenmeyer 1901: 241 n.15, 297 n.20 (showing undue scepticism as to the deliberateness of Alexios' wording).
47 See Koder 2002: 127–128, 133–134.
48 On Urban's predilection for invoking *fides catholica*, *ecclesia catholica* and other variations, see Becker 2012: 70–71, 75–80.
49 Becker 1988: 215 (text), 222–224, 235–237 (commentary); Becker 2012: 70 and n.208, 79; Gebauer 1993: 188–189; Bayer 2002: 154.
50 This emerges from Paschal's answer: ed. Jaffé *et al.* 1888: no. 6334; Bayer 2002: 196–197 and n.123.
51 Becker 1988: 252–253; Gebauer 1993: 188; Bayer 2002: 156, 161.
52 Gautier 1971: 220 (text), 225–231 (commentary), 283–284 (dating).
53 Bernold of St. Blaise, ed. trans. Robinson and Robinson-Hammerstein 2002: 412–413.
54 Becker 1988: 351–362, 372–375; Becker 2012: 39–43, 82–85.
55 Theodore Skoutariotes, *Synopsis chronike,* ed. Sathas 1894: 184–185; Charanis 1949: 33–34.
56 Pahlitzsch 2001: 58–60. See, for the text of the letters, Hagenmeyer 1901: 141–142, 146–149. See also Flori 1999: 344–345, 348–349.
57 Magdalino 2003: 50–51.

58 Ryder 2018.
59 See John the Oxite, *Logos peri ton azymon*, ed. Leib 1924: 262 and n.84 (text).
60 Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. trans. Edgington 2007: 338–339; Shepard 2012: 365.
61 Pryor and Jeffreys 2012: 38–39, 45, 64–67, 77.
62 Shepard 2005: 298 (text), 304 (translation).
63 Shepard 2005: 298 (text), 304 (translation).
64 See Grumel 1933: 24–25; Runciman 1955: 124–126; Beck 1959: 616–618; Darrouzès 1965: 51–59; Bayer 2002: 191–196.
65 Ed. Amelli 1933: 35–36 and n.1; Grumel 1933: 24–25; Bayer 2002: 192–193; Shepard 2010: 776–777.
66 Alexios is credited with offering an 'argument' (*lemma*) on behalf of the eastern position on the *filioque*, while debating with 'the bishop of Milan', presumably Pietro Grossolano: *PG* 102, col. 400A, and n.98.
67 The dating and, indeed, processes of compilation and completion of the *Armoury* remain uncertain: Beck 1959: 614, 616; Malamut 2007: 240; Rigo 2009: 31–32. Title 27 of the *Armoury* is called 'Against Bogomils'. Its detailed presentation of their teachings is introduced and rounded off by accounts of how the Bogomil leader Basil was tracked down, out-argued, exposed and condemned by 'our most wise and magnanimous emperor': *PG* 130, cols. 1289–1332, at cols. 1289D–1292A, 1332B–C. See Shepard 2010: 771–773.
68 *PG* 130, col. 875C; *PG* 102, cols. 391–400. Azymes rank among contemporary deviations, but only within the confines of Title 23, 'Against Armenians': *PG* 130, cols. 1173–1189, at 1180–1188; Shepard 2010: 771–772.
69 *PG* 130, cols. 1332–1360; Shepard 2010: 773.
70 Theophylact of Ochrid, *Conversation with a Pupil about the Accusations against the Latins*, ed. Gautier 1980: 250–253. Dating of this text is discussed by Bayer 2002: 201 n.141. For Theophylact, see *PBW* (consulted 29 March 2015) Theophylaktos 105, <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/108475>.
71 Theophylact of Ochrid, Conversation with a Pupil about the Accusations against the Latins, ed. Gautier 1980: 274–275.
72 Malamut 2007: 133–135, 142, 148, 246–249.
73 Riley-Smith 1997: 111–113, 115–127, 139–140.
74 Haskins 1910: 295 (text), 294 (commentary).
75 Ed. trans. Hudson 2002: xlvi, cvi–cvii (introduction), 68–69.
76 Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, ed. Constable 1967: 209 (text); II: 148–149, 292 (commentary).
77 Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. trans. Edgington 2007: 642–645; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. trans. Chibnall 1975: 352–353; Shepard 2003: 14–18.
78 Ed. Mabille 1874: 80, no. 92; for his links with Alexios and with Stephen of Blois, see Shepard 2005: 298 (text), 303 (translation), 314–317 (commentary).
79 Hagenmeyer 1901: 138–139. See Cheynet 2002: 123.
80 Shepard 2005: 298–299 (text), 303–304 (translation).
81 Shepard 2005: 302 (text), 308 (translation).
82 Shepard 2005: 300, 299 (text), 305 (translation).
83 Riley-Smith 1997: 127.
84 Koder 2002: 134.
85 On Manuel's attempts at rapprochement, if not reunion, with the West, see Magdalino 1988; Magdalino 1993. For treatment of significant antecedents in the reign of Alexios to the phenomenon of Manuel Komnenos, see Rodriguez Suarez 2014.

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7

WHO WAS WHO AT THE COURT OF CONSTANTINE XI, 1449–1453[1]

Jonathan Harris

Although he was the very last in the long line of Byzantine emperors, Constantine XI Palaiologos rejoiced in exactly the same official title as his predecessors: that of 'emperor and autocrat of the Romans' (Βασιλεύς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ τῶν Ρωμαιῶν).[2] In reality, of course, Constantine enjoyed nothing like the kind of universal authority that those words imply. Most of what had once been the Byzantine empire was now under the rule either of the Ottoman sultan or of the maritime republic of Venice, leaving him only Constantinople, the land a few miles beyond its walls, some islands in the Aegean and the Peloponnese. These last remnants were to be engulfed one by one between 1453 and 1460 as the armies of sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481) mopped up what was left of Byzantium. Yet in spite of his precarious political, territorial and economic position, Constantine's brief tenure of the Byzantine throne bears witness to a curious phenomenon: even at this late stage the Byzantine emperor commanded considerable loyalty not only among his own subjects in Constantinople but also in the lost lands beyond his shrunken borders.

On the face of it, there was no longer much incentive to serve the Byzantine emperor. Unlike the great days of the past when ambitious young men had been irresistibly drawn to the 'fountain of gold', the imperial court was no longer a place to get rich. Constantine XI had some difficulty even maintaining his own palace at Blachernae and when it became clear in early 1453 that the sultan was going to march on Constantinople, he was reduced to pawning a ruby to raise cash for the defence. He was thus hardly in a position to provide much in the way of patronage, preferment or reward as his illustrious predecessors had.[3] Consequently there were three clearly discernible types of men at his court. First, there were the grandees: those individuals who were so wealthy that they needed no recompense from the emperor. Then there were the middling sort: men who were wealthy and privileged but still grateful for any largesse that came their way. Finally, there were what might be termed employees, the people retained by the emperor for a specific skill or service who had few resources of their own.

Turning first to the grandees, these were men whom Constantine inherited from the previous reign, that of his brother, John VIII (1425–1448). The most prominent was Loukas Notaras, who as *megadux* or grand duke was effectively

a chief minister. He was already well acquainted with Constantine because they had administered the city together while John VIII was absent at the Council of Ferrara/Florence between 1437 and 1440.[4] Another was Demetrius Palaiologos Metochites who was both grand stratopedarch and eparch of the city and who had been John VIII's ambassador to the Council of Basel in the 1430s.[5] Then there was Manuel Palaiologos Iagaris who had been one of those sent to Mistra in 1448 to announce the death of John VIII to Constantine who was then administering the Morea as despot.[6] Not surprisingly, all three were linked to the Palaiologos family by some kind of marriage tie or descent, but more significantly they were all extremely wealthy. Their money came not through land or ancestral inheritance but largely from trade. Thus although he was possessed of a long and illustrious pedigree, Metochites owed his fortune to his marriage into the arriviste Goudelis family who had made their money through commerce and loans. Similarly, the Iagaris clan were heavily involved in Constantinople's lucrative cloth trade.[7] Their fortunes were eclipsed by that of Notaras who was by far the richest man in the Byzantine capital, thanks to his commercial connections with Genoa and his substantial stake in Constantinople's import-export business. He could afford dowries of 20,000 gold hyperpera for each of his three daughters when they married between 1445 and 1453 while another daughter, Anna, was sent to Italy with a large amount of money for safety shortly before Constantinople fell. This and other family assets were salted away in the bank of St. George in Genoa.[8] In view of this vast wealth, it is very unlikely that Constantine had to pay for the services of men like Notaras, Metochites and Iagaris. On the contrary, in some cases they were bankrolling him. When a loan was raised to provide for the defence of Constantinople in 1453, it was Loukas Notaras who provided the collateral, pledging his own property. Inscriptions on the land walls of Constantinople suggest that Notaras and Iagaris were paying for their upkeep too.[9]

When it comes to the middling sort of courtier, those who were clearly wealthy but not in the league of the grandees, the obvious example is George Sphrantzes. That is not because he was necessarily particularly distinguished. Indeed one might question whether he was quite as central to Constantine's inner circle as he implies. Rather it is because he left behind a detailed account of his career in the memoir known as the *Chronicon Minus*. Sphrantzes had first held office as *protovestiarites* under Constantine's father, Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425), before joining the future emperor at Mistra while he was still despot. When Constantine succeeded to the throne, it was Sphrantzes who was sent to Hadrianople to announce the news to the Ottoman sultan, Murad II (1421–1451), and he subsequently joined his master in Constantinople. The *Chronicon Minus* then records in great detail how Sphrantzes set out on an arduous trek to Trebizond and Georgia in October 1449 to seek out a suitable bride for the new emperor Constantine. He was away for nearly two years partly because he received no instructions from Constantinople after the ship carrying them was wrecked. He does not seem to have received much in the way of material recompense for his devoted service. When he arrived back in the capital from the east in September 1451, the emperor professed himself to be greatly in his debt and stated his intention of

rewarding him. Nothing seems to have materialised, however, apart from instructions to undertake another diplomatic journey, this time to the Peloponnese and Cyprus. Sphrantzes protested that he had only just got back from the last mission and feared that his wife might leave him or become a nun if he went off again. Constantine promised that if he undertook this assignment it would be his last and he also cast about for some office to which to promote his loyal subordinate. That proved to be easier said than done. The positions of *mesazon, megalos kontostavlos* and *megas logothetes* were considered but they had all been promised to someone else. In the end the launch of the final Ottoman attack put a stop to the discussion.[10] Any reward that Sphrantzes did receive for his services was largely honorary: a tunic, caftan, coat, cap and sword were all he got as recompense for the forty days of imprisonment at Patras that he suffered on Constantine's behalf in 1429.[11] As in the case of the grandees, Sphrantzes' service to the emperor seems to have been motivated by loyalty and a sense of duty alone: there can be no mistaking his pride when he describes how his bond to Constantine had an almost sacred dimension.[12]

Others among Constantine's middle-ranking office holders are more difficult to trace because they do not feature in the literary sources in the way that Sphrantzes and the grandees do. On the other hand, they do crop up every now and then in archival records. We know from the State Archives of Venice, for example, that in 1451 a certain Andronicus Koumoussis was given citizenship of the Venetian republic. The document describes him as 'the treasurer (*thesaurius*) of the emperor of Constantinople', so that he may have held the office of *prokathemenos* of the *vestiarion*. According to Pseudo-Kodinos, this functionary attended to both the incoming and outgoing expenses.[13] Then there was Alexios Laskaris who is only known from a papal indulgence issued for his son Theodore in 1481. Alexios is described in this document as having been the *referendarius* of the late Constantine XI. The term is hardly very specific but it suggests some kind of functionary.[14] Finally there was George Theophilos who arrived in Rome as a refugee in 1462, hoping to raise the ransoms of his mother and sisters. He received a similar indulgence to that given to Theodore Laskaris in order to help him raise the money and he later carried this with him to France and England. The indulgence describes him as a *familiaris* of Constantine XI, that is to say a member of his household.[15]

The absence of any mention of Koumoussis, Laskaris and Theophilos in Byzantine literary sources would suggest that they were not in the same league of wealth and power as plutocrats like Notaras, Metochites and Iagaris, but it is unlikely that they were poor or solely dependent on the emperor for their living. Nothing can be said about George Theophilos because this surname is not attested in Constantinople before the fall.[16] The Koumoussis family, on the other hand, appears very regularly in the surviving documentation because its members had long been wealthy merchants in the Byzantine capital. When the head of the family died in 1397, he left over 7,000 gold hyperpera although much of his property had been damaged during the Ottoman siege of Constantinople of 1394 to 1402.[17] Andronicus himself is likely to have been involved in trade because

one very good reason for obtaining Venetian citizenship was that the beneficiary could then enjoy exemption from most customs duties levied by the emperor on goods imported to and exported from Constantinople. Moreover, he seems to have deposited a sizeable amount of money in Venice for safekeeping which his sons were able to inherit in 1457.[18] The same applies to Alexios Laskaris. His family was, of course, a former imperial dynasty but in recent years, like many Byzantine noble families, they had diversified into trade by purchasing and selling commodities brought in on Venetian and Genoese merchant vessels. Certainly a Theodore Laskaris was wealthy enough to commission a manuscript in 1442 while George Laskaris Philanthropinos was able to lodge 3,000 ducats with a merchant of Rome for safekeeping in 1439.[19] Other members of the family were in Constantine's service, such as Athanasios Laskaris who was sent on an embassy to Venice, Naples, Mantua and Ferrara in 1450–1451.[20] It is unlikely though that Alexios or Athanasios derived much material benefit from their imperial service and in all probability, like Sphrantzes, they saw it simply as an honour and a duty.

The third category, the paid employees, were unlike the other two groups in that they could not have afforded to work for nothing. They often came from outside the emperor's borders and were completely dependent on him for their livelihoods. Indeed there were times when he could not even provide that. At the Council of Ferrara in 1438, several members of John VIII's bodyguard, who were probably of Turkic origin, approached his confessor Gregory, asking him to intercede with the emperor on their behalf and get their considerable arrears of wages paid. Gregory did raise their case but when he got nowhere he instead gave the soldiers some of his own money. When that was spent and the men came back for more, he gave them some of his ecclesiastical vestments to sell.[21] Constantine XI found himself in the same predicament as his brother when the Hungarian cannon maker Urban offered him his services shortly before the last siege of Constantinople. The emperor promised him as generous a salary as he could but when that was not paid, Urban had recourse not to a clergyman but to the Ottoman sultan in Hadrianople. There he built for Mehmed II the gigantic cannon that was to blast through the walls of Constantinople in 1453: in this case Constantine's penury ultimately cost him his throne and his life.[22]

Nevertheless, there were individuals from outside the empire who were employed by Constantine XI and his immediate predecessors in relatively lowly positions and they were apparently happy to be so. According to the historian Doukas, one group of palace guards were 'the most faithful subjects of the empire, distinguished by their sacred zeal for the holy churches and their relics, and for the city's imperial prestige'.[23] These guards were, he claimed, Cretans. Both their presence and their apparently loyal service is at first sight something of a puzzle. After all, their native island had ceased to be part of the Byzantine empire in 1204 and had been under Venetian rule for well over two centuries. Much recent research has suggested that by the fifteenth century, Greeks living under Frankish or Venetian rule had accepted the change and no longer considered the emperor in Constantinople as their rightful ruler or even remembered the days when he had been.[24] While there

were large numbers of Cretans living in the Byzantine capital in the mid-fifteenth century, they were there as Venetian subjects and they were concentrated in the Venetian quarter on the Golden Horn.[25] So why should some of them have entered the service of the emperor and how did he repay them?

The terse line in Doukas provides no answer to these questions but another example may do so. In the months following the fall of Constantinople, an individual called John Ierarchis arrived in western Europe as a refugee, having lost everything in the sack of the city. He is likely to have gone first to Rome where he came to the attention of two cardinals. One was the cardinal of Fermo, Domenico Capranica (1400–1458); the other was the cardinal of Santa Prassede, Alain Coëtivy (1407–1474) who was soon to be sent to France as papal legate to preach the crusade to recover Constantinople from the Ottomans. These cardinals provided Ierarchis with letters of recommendation, outlining his plight. With these, he travelled around Europe. He was probably at Lille in the summer of 1455 when the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1419–1467), gave a gift of money to a certain 'Jehan Gerarche'.[26] Six months earlier he had been in London where the archbishop of York, William Booth, issued an indulgence on his behalf. It is the text of this English indulgence that provides the most important information on Ierarchis's life before he headed west, describing him as the *scutifer* or shield bearer of the late Constantine XI.[27] This might mean that Ierarchis had held the office of *skouterios*, the person who carried the emperor's shield in procession, before the catastrophe of 1453.[28]

Although the indulgence says that that Ierarchis was a noble (*nobilis vir*), his obscure name and complete absence from the literary sources suggests otherwise. He was certainly not a grandee like Notaras. It is also unlikely that he belonged to the middling sort of courtier. It is true that, like the Koumoussis family, he had been involved in Constantinople's flourishing import and export market. He was probably the 'Zuan Jarachi' who appears in the commercial records of the Venetian notary, Giacomo Badoer in 1438: he had a stake in two consignments of general commodities that were being shipped into Constantinople.[29] On the second occasion he had an interest in a consignment of 310 sacks of goods but only 304 reached Constantinople because the ship's captain had, for some unfathomable reason, thrown six of them into the sea.[30] Unlike Koumoussis, however, his commercial activity seems to have been limited to a few minor transactions so that it is unlikely that he had private means to serve the emperor virtually unpaid as Sphrantzes did and it is equally unlikely that being the emperor's shield bearer yielded much in the way of salary.

If the emperor was not paying Ierarchis though, somebody else was. In February 1451 the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, Girolamo Minotto, was in need of a new interpreter to replace the former post-holder, Gabriel Katakalon. The appointee was a certain John Ierarchis who was almost certainly the same man named in the English indulgence. According to the Venetian record, he had been born on Crete and had grown up in Venice, living next door, it was said, to the palace of the Doges. He had an excellent knowledge of both Greek and Latin and had accompanied many other Venetian officials on their travels

in the Levant. He had translated in the past when Byzantine envoys had visited Venice.[31] Ierarchis was then the perfect go-between in Venetian negotiations with Constantine XI. The record of his appointment makes it quite clear though that it was the Venetian bailo that Ierarchis worked for, not the emperor. So one is tempted to suspect that the noble status and the shield-bearing of the English indulgence might have been invented or exaggerated. This was common practice among Byzantine refugees in western Europe who hoped to gain greater sympathy by enhancing their importance and status.[32] There are good reasons though for thinking that the latter detail at least, Ierarchis' imperial office, was not made up. That is suggested by another, similar example from a few years later.

In February 1456, pope Calixtus III (1455–1458) wrote to the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, recommending the envoy of Constantine XI's brother, Demetrius, who was still maintaining a precarious independence at Mistra two and a half years after the fall of Constantinople. The envoy was a man named Frankoulios Servopoulos who is known to have moved to Mistra from Constantinople and was travelling through Italy, France and England in search of support against the anticipated Ottoman invasion of the Peloponnese. When the mission was over, Servopoulos did not return to Mistra but entered papal service instead. He was sent by Calixtus' successor, Pius II (1458–1464), on another mission to France and England to urge support for the proposed crusade to recover Constantinople. He spent his later years in Venice, probably in the household of Anna Notaras, daughter of the grand duke Loukas Notaras.[33]

Three surviving documents from Servopoulos' dealings with western powers make it clear that before the fall of Constantinople he had held office at the court of Constantine XI. Calixtus III's letter of February 1456 describes him as *olim imperatoris Grecorum cancellarius olim ipsius imperatoris et generalis iudex Romeorum*.[34] An earlier letter of the king of Aragon, Alfonso V (1416–1458) is addressed to: *Magnifico viro Franzulio Servopulo, olim imperiali cancellario ac iudici Romeorum generali* . . . .[35] Lastly, the treasury accounts of the duke of Burgundy record a gift of three hundred livres to an envoy of the pope who was passing through the town of Mons in January 1459. The beneficiary is not named but given that he is described as *chancellier de l'empereur de Constantinople* and since Servopoulos is known to have been in the area at that time as the envoy of Pius II, he must have been the unnamed recipient.[36]

Of the two offices he is credited with in these documents, one is easily recognisable. The *Katholikos Krites* or General Judge of the Romans was a legal appointment and many prominent figures held the post at one point or another in the last decades before the fall, including George Scholarios, the future patriarch Gennadios II.[37] The other office attributed to Servopoulos, that of chancellor, is more difficult to pin down. It might have been that of *megas logothetes* for which Sphrantzes was considered and whose main function seems to have been that of drafting correspondence with foreign powers.[38] Servopoulos was certainly living in Constantinople before 1453. Like Andronicus Koumoussis and John Ierarchis,

he probably supplemented his income through commercial transactions and he was certainly wealthy enough to be able to lend sixty hyperpera to Ierarchis' predecessor as Venetian interpreter, Gabriel Katakalon, in 1443.[39] On the other hand, he does not seem to have been a middle-ranking Constantinopolitan noble like Sphrantzes. He was certainly a Catholic by religion rather than Orthodox and his unusual first name suggests that he might have been of mixed Latin and Greek parentage.[40] He had therefore, like Ierarchis, probably been born in one of the former territories of the Byzantine empire, such as Crete, and although of Greek mother tongue, he had spent a good deal of time in a Latin environment. That likelihood in itself gives rise to the same suspicion that attached itself to the shield-bearing Ierarchis: that Servopoulos's association with the court of Constantine XI was either made up or exaggerated, something that he perhaps told his western hosts to enhance his importance. After all, the three documents that describe him as holding office at Constantine's court all come from non-Byzantine sources written after the fall of Constantinople.

A surviving document in Greek from before the fall suggests otherwise. The Byzantines had a longstanding commercial treaty with Venice which was renewed every ten years or so. That took place on schedule in September 1442 and as usual both Greek and Latin versions were prepared. The Greek was drawn up by the imperial notary George Manikaites and:

> the Latin by the hand of the learned man Frankoulios Servopoulos, by the authority of the emperor and of the doge of Venice notary and chancellor of the said lord bailo and of the court of the Venetians in Constantinople.[41]

Servopoulos was then, like Ierarchis, employed by the Venetian bailo but interestingly the treaty supplies a further detail. It specifies that he was linked both to the Venetians and to the Byzantine court, describing him as notary and chancellor to the bailo by permission of both the emperor and the Venetian doge (βασιλικῇ καὶ δουκικῇ τῶν Βενετίκων ἐξουσίᾳ). The suggestion is that he worked for the bailo but was in some way connected with the emperor as well. That conclusion is reinforced by the part that Servopoulos played in an event that took place in 1451. When some Hussite envoys visited Constantinople, he had the job of translating their words. The reporter of these events, the Brescian poet Ubertino Pusculo, is clearly hostile to Servopoulos, describing him as *vanus*, presumably meaning 'deceitful' or maybe 'vainglorious'. The main point here though is that Servopoulos was clearly not translating Greek into Latin, as he did in the treaty with Venice, but the other way round. That suggests that in this instance he was translating for, and taking his orders from, Constantine XI.[42] Thus it would appear that Servopoulos had a foot in both camps. While the bailo paid him, he served the emperor as well. It seems safe to conclude that John Ierarchis was party to a similar arrangement and hence their Byzantine titles of chancellor and shield bearer which was all recompense that the emperor could give them.

This dual allegiance was not a phenomenon restricted to Constantine's reign. During the reign of John VIII, John Torcello of Crete was in the service of pope Eugenius IV but he also claimed to be the emperor's chamberlain and he carried out diplomatic missions on his behalf.[43]

This double employment answers one of the questions raised by Doukas' allusion to the loyal Cretans mentioned above: it explains how some Cretans were making their living while also serving the Byzantine emperor. But it does not answer the second question: why should they have wished to work for him in the first place? It is understandable why someone like Sphrantzes should do so for very little in return: he and his family lived and held property in the lands under the rule of the emperor. To put it bluntly, if Constantine went down, they would go down with him. Men like Torcello, Ierarchis and Servopoulos, on the other hand, had roots and self-interest outside the empire. The obvious career move would be to throw in their lot wholeheartedly with Venice or the pope. It would appear, though, that some Greek-speaking individuals born and raised under Venetian rule, even if they were Catholics, retained a residual loyalty to the *basileus* in Constantinople. One example was reported by the Florentine humanist and traveller Cristoforo Buondelmonti (*c.* 1375–1435), who visited Crete in the 1420s. He claimed that several families living in the west of the island insisted that they were Romans and that their ancestors had come from Rome in the time of Constantine the Great, thus linking themselves with the first Christian emperor's successor in Constantinople.[44] The perception worked in the other direction too. The Constantinopolitan Michael Apostolis took refuge on Crete after 1453 because he felt it was culturally and linguistically akin to his homeland.[45] The link between Constantinople and Crete had survived the centuries of political separation.

The desperate times in which he lived ensured that Constantine XI could hardly be a typical Byzantine emperor. By the same token, the men who served him did so for a very different set of reasons from those of their predecessors of the Early and Middle Byzantine periods. While ambition or financial gain no longer drew them to the Byzantine court, an abiding loyalty and patriotism did. What is even more striking is the way that this compulsion to serve the emperor was felt not only by Constantine's wealthy subjects but also by people who had been born and raised in lands that had long ceased to be part of the Byzantine empire. Yet while it is striking, it is not perhaps so surprising for it is paralleled by the readiness of those who ruled over portions of what had once been the Byzantine empire to receive confirmation and legitimisation of their position from Constantinople. In 1415, the Italian adventurer, Carlo I Tocco, whose domain included parts of the Morea and Epirus and some of the Ionian islands, sought and was granted the title of despot and the appropriate insignia by emperor Manuel II.[46] A similar concession was gratefully received by George Branković of Serbia in 1429.[47] There are many other examples of the way in which the last Byzantine emperors were able to wield a kind of moral authority that was out of all proportion to their political power and it is that residual prestige that explains the readiness of Notaras and Sphrantzes, Ierarchis and Servopoulos to serve at the court of Constantine XI.[48]

Notes

1 I am indebted to Niccolò Fattori, Andrea Nanetti and Eugenia Russell for their linguistic advice and to Shaun Tougher and an anonymous referee for their encouragement and their comments on the first draft of this chapter.
2 He used that style in his signature to a document issued in the Peloponnese in February 1449: Zepos and Zepos 1931: 707. On Constantine's short reign, see Nicol 1992: 36–94; Malherbe 2001: 171–221; Harris 2010: 168–206.
3 Tafur, ed. Jiménez de la Espada 1874: 180–181, trans. Letts 1926: 145; Roccatagliata 1999: 136–145; Harris 2012: 122–123.
4 *PLP* 20730; Syropoulos 4.18, ed. trans. Laurent 1971: 215; Sphrantzes 22.12–23.1, ed. Maisano 1990: 78–81, trans. Magoulias 1975: 49; Tafur, ed. Jiménez de la Espada 1874: 151–152, trans. Letts 1926: 125–126.
5 Gill 1959: 54–56; *PLP* 17981.
6 Sphrantzes 29.4, ed. Maisano 1990: 102–103, trans. Magoulias 1975: 57; Syropoulos 4.39, 5.6, Appendix 4.26, ed. trans. Laurent 1971: 240–241, 260–261, 628–629; *PLP* 7810.
7 Harris 2009: 173; Ganchou 2010; Harris 2012: 126.
8 Lambros 1902: 17; Matschke 1995; Ganchou 2002: 164; Ganchou 1998: 151.
9 Olgiati 1989: 167; Van Millingen 1899: 108, 192–193.
10 Sphrantzes 29.3, 30.1, 32.5, 33.2–34.12, ed. Maisano 1990: 100–105, 114, trans. Philippides 1980: 57–58, 62–69; *PLP* 27278.
11 Sphrantzes 19.4, ed. Maisano 1990: 56–58, trans. Philippides 1980: 40–41.
12 Sphrantzes 15.5, ed. Maisano 1990: 34–35: Ἐπεὶ δὲ μετὰ τοῦ δεσπότου κῦρ Κωνσταντίνου εἶχον ἀγάπην καὶ πληροφορίαν, ἥν ὁ Θεὸς ἀπεδέχετο; trans. Philippides 1980: 30–31.
13 Archivio di Stato, Venice, Privilegi, Reg. 2, f. 35v; Iorga 1900–1901: 76: Andronico Commussi, thesaurio serenissimi domini imperatoris Constantinopolitani . . .; Pseudo-Kodinos 3.185, ed. trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 110–111; Ganchou 2006: 63–64.
14 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Vat. 608, f. 270.
15 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Vat. 507, ff. 101v–102; The National Archives, London, E403/827B, membrane 2; De l'Épinois 1863: 498.
16 *PLP* 7651 records a Michael Theophilos on Cyprus in 1397. An individual of the same name was in Spain as a refugee in 1479: De la Torre (1949–1965), vol. 1: 25 (no. 34).
17 *PLP* 13467–8; Necipoğlu 2009: 156–158; Ganchou 2006: 57–58.
18 Archivio di Stato, Venice, Senato, Terra, Reg. 4, f. 40v (orig. 39v); Ganchou 2006: 70–75, 95–96.
19 Necipoğlu 2009: 192; Harris 2010: 139–140; *PLP* 14530, 29753.
20 Archivio di Stato, Venice, Senato Mar, Reg. 4, f. 2; Iorga 1900–1901: 68–69; Cerone 1902: 571–577, 592–593; Thiriet 1958–1961, vol. 3: 159–160 (no. 2835); Lambros 1912–1930, vol. 4: 265–266; *PLP* 14522.
21 Syropoulos 8.16, ed. trans. Laurent 1971: 404: Ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔχω ἄλλο τι δοῦναι ὑμῖν, διὸ λαβόντες ταῦτα πωλήσατε καὶ φάγετε τὸ τίμημα αὐτῶν.
22 Doukas 35.1, ed. Bekker 1834: 247–248, trans. Magoulias 1975: 200; Chalkokondyles 8.6, ed. trans. Kaldellis 2014, vol. 2: 176–177.
23 Doukas 27.4, ed. Bekker 1834: 185; trans. Magoulias 1975: 162
24 Page 2008: 279–280; McKee 2000: 2, 75; Wright 2011: 73.
25 Ganchou 2013: 345–346.
26 Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille, B2020, f. 354v; Taparel 1987: 54.
27 Borthwick Institute, York Reg. 20, ff. 167–167v; Harris 1995: 193: Cum dilectus nobis in Christo nobilis vir Johannes Jerarchis illius inclitissime Constantinopolitane civitatis civis diveque memorie Constantini ultimi eiusdem inclitissime civitatis imperatoris scutifer . . .

28 Pseudo-Kodinos 3.183, ed. trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 104–105.
29 Badoer 1956: 488: A dì 8 Mazio 1439 per zenere de so raxon e mia e de Zuan Jarachi, per la mità che i tocha de perp. 400 che per avanti dì a Atumi Protochumino per la parte che speta a nui a pagar de i noli de le dite zenere – c.314 perp.
30 Badoer 1956: 630: Zenere sachi 304, che doveva eser 310 ma per el patrón ne fo butà 6 in mar, de raxon de Zanin Jarachi e Antumi Protachumino, e de Franzesco de i Albizi e mia, zascun de nui per un quarto, rezevude per la griparia patrón Zorzi da Scarpanto, le qual sono in man de Antonio Protochumini da Rodi, le qual zenere pexò in Tripoli chant. 303 r. 28 Damascini, diè dar a dì 14 Fever, per cassa chontadi al dito Zorzi da Scarpanto patrón de la griparia, per parte de la nostra mitade de i noli ch'el diè aver, zioè per Franzesco di i Albizi e mi – c.289 perp.
31 Thiriet 1966–1971, vol. 2: 191 (no. 1457).
32 Harris 2013: 645–649.
33 Cappelli 1891: 168; *PLP* 25183; Harris 1995: 47, 55–56, 106–108, 122–123.
34 Cappelli 1891: 168.
35 Cerone 1902: 823.
36 Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille. B2034 (Chambre des Comptes de Lille, Jan–Sept. 1459), f. 172 ; Le Glay *et al.* 1863–1906, vol. 4: 207: Au chancellier de l'empereur de Constantinople, derrain trépassé, la somme de trois cens livres, pour don à lui fait par Monseigneur pour lui aidier à deffraier de la dicte ville de Mons, où il est nagaires venu par devers mondit Seigneur en ambassade, de par nostre Saint Père, pour le fait de la foy chrestienne.
37 Lemerle 1948: 315; Lemerle 1964: 43.
38 Sphrantzes 34.3, ed. Maisano 1990: 124–125, trans. Philippides 1980: 66–67; Pseudo-Kodinos 3.174, ed. trans. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov 2013: 84–85.
39 Roccatagliata 1999: 138–139.
40 He was described as such in Calixtus III's letter of February 1455: Cappelli 1891: 169.
41 Miklosich and Müller 1860–1890, vol. 3: 215: . . . λατινικοῖς δὲ διὰ χειρὸς λογίου ἀνδρὸς Φραγγουλίου τοῦ Σερβοπούλου, βασιλικῇ καὶ δουκικῇ τῶν Βενετίκων ἐξουσίᾳ δίπλου νοταρίου καὶ καντζελαρίου τοῦ εἰρημένου σύρ μπαϊούλου καὶ τῆς κούρτης τῶν Βενετίκων ἐν τῇ Κωσταντινουπόλει.
42 Pusculo 2.543, ed. Ellissen 1857: 37: Expectata diu vitiataque verba locutum excipit interpres vanus Francullius, huncque Graecorum sermone facit Romana sonantem . . .
43 Setton 1976–1984, vol. 2: 69; Ganchou 2013: 359–361.
44 Buondelmonti 1897: 22–23, 155, 178–179; McKee 2000: 74–75.
45 Ed. Noiret 1889: 148–149; Geanakoplos 1962: 80.
46 Anonymous 1.4, 8.3, ed. Schirò 1975: 117, 382–383; Spandounes, ed. Sathas 1890: 150, trans. Nicol 1997: 27.
47 Doukas 30.3, ed. Bekker 1834: 207, trans. Magoulias 1975: 176.
48 Shepard 2012: 82–86.

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Part III

THE EMPEROR AS RULER

Duties and ideals


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8

‘LAW IS KING OF ALL THINGS’? THE EMPEROR AND THE LAW

Bernard H. Stolte

Introduction

Reading Fergus Millar’s *The Emperor in the Roman World* is a humbling experience. The example held up to the contributors to this volume has set an impossibly high standard, or shall we say challenge, when it was pointed out that for Byzantium we do not have anything similar to Millar’s book. It is my purpose to offer a few observations on the emperor and the law in Byzantium, in the hope that they may contribute to the genesis of *The Emperor in the Byzantine World*.

Nomos basileus

Few poems have been used and abused as frequently as Pindar’s Ode that is known as *Fragment* 169, the opening words of which are quoted in my title. Plato, Aristides, Libanius, Chrysippus: they have all used the words to their own purpose. The Roman jurist Marcianus, who lived at the beginning of the third century AD, in the first book of his *Institutiones*,[1] quotes the Greek words through Chrysippus, and Marcianus’ words were in turn excerpted by Tribonian’s committee that compiled Justinian I’s *Digest*, promulgated in 533. They were placed in *Digest* 1,3 *De legibus senatusque consultis et longa consuetudine*, in fr. 2, together with a citation from Demosthenes, and it is there that their career in Byzantine law took its inception (the passage is provided on the following page).

The section with Demosthenes in part repeats in Greek the Latin words of Papinian in the first fragment *Digest* 1,3,1. Historically, of course, it is Papinian translating Demosthenes. Whatever the path they followed, the words *nomos basileus* cannot be ignored in a chapter on the emperor and the law.

According to the Justinianic curriculum, the first book of the *Digest* was part of *Ta Prota*, literally the beginning, consisting of *Digest* books one to four, which, together with the *Institutes*, had to be studied by the *cupida legum iuventus* (‘young people yearning to study the law’) in their first year. For the purpose of teaching, the Latin texts were translated, summarized and commented upon in Greek. Greek passages in the Latin *Digest* did not need to be translated, and it

Nam et Demosthenes orator sic definit: τοῦτο ἐστι νόμος, ᾧ πάντας ἀνθρώπους προσήκει πείθεσθαι διὰ πολλά, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι πᾶς ἐστι νόμος εὕρημα μὲν καὶ δῶρον θεοῦ, δόγμα δὲ ἀνθρώπων φρονίμων, ἐπανόρθωμα δὲ τῶν ἑκουσίων καὶ ἀκουσίων ἁμαρτημάτων, πόλεως δὲ συνθήκη κοινή, καθ᾽ ἣν ἅπασι προσήκει ζῆν τοῖς ἐν τῇ πόλει. Sed et philosophus summae stoicae sapientiae Chrysippus sic incipit libro, quem fecit περὶ νόμου: **ὁ νόμος πάντων ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων**· δεῖ δε αὐτὸν προστάτην τε εἶναι τῶν καλῶν καὶ τῶν αἰσχρῶν καὶ ἄρχοντα καὶ ἡγεμόνα, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο κανόνα τε εἶναι δικαίων καὶ ἀδίκων καὶ τῶν φύσει πολιτικῶν ζώων, προστακτικὸν μὲν ὧν ποιητέον, ἀπαγορευτικὸν δὲ ὧν οὐ ποιητέον.

For also the orator Demosthenes gives the following definition: 'Law is what man should obey for various reasons, but in particular because every law is an invention and gift of God, an opinion of sensible men, a correction of voluntary and involuntary mistakes, the common covenant of a city, according to which all people in that city should live'. But also Chrysippus, a philosopher of the greatest Stoic wisdom, begins a book that he has written about the law as follows: '**The law is the king of all things divine and human**.' It must be the ruler, leader and guide of good as well as of bad men, and in that respect the standard of just and unjust and a compass for those beings that are social by nature, commanding what ought to be done and prohibiting what is to be avoided.

seems safe to assume that Pindar's words as transmitted through Chrysippus and Marcianus to the *Digest* were read by aspiring law students. The question, then, is what they thought these words meant, if they thought about them at all. The fact that the quotation figured prominently at the beginning, and that it mentions *nomos* and *basileus* together, cannot fail to raise some curiosity about the answer. Roughly 1,000 years separate Pindar and Justinian; it stands to reason that the the poet's words were being understood differently in the sixth and later centuries than at the time of their composition.

The meaning of *nomos* in the fifth century BC has been disputed vigorously. For the discussion I refer to an article by Hugh Lloyd-Jones of 1972.[2] *Nomos* was taken to mean variously 'custom' or 'usage', 'the attitude traditionally or conventionally taken to a norm', 'a male goddess of fate', 'an inviolable order, which dominates the belief and will of gods and men', and 'law of the universe'.[3] Lloyd-Jones' own view is that to Pindar, 'Law . . . was identical with the will of Zeus'.[4] Its precise meaning in antiquity need not detain us here, and I would like to take the gigantic jump to sixth-century Byzantium, and thus, as I have argued elsewhere, to the beginning of Byzantine law.[5]

The place in Justinian's *Digest* of Marcianus' fragment with Pindar's words is indicative of their meaning in the sixth century. The *Digest* opens with a title *De iustitia et iure*, 'On Justice and the Law' – the lack in the English language of a distinction between *droit et loi, diritto e legge, Recht und Gesetz* painfully

manifests itself – and is followed by the second, *De origine iuris* ('On the origin of the law'). The third title speaks about law in a concrete sense: *De legibus senatusque consultis et longa consuetudine*, 'On laws and decisions of the senate and on custom'. Custom, *longa consuetudo*, does not have the connotation of a timeless, religiously coloured, morally binding unwritten norm: *longa consuetudo* has an entirely different meaning. This is further illuminated by the place our fragment has within this title: it comes second after Papinian's definition of *lex*, and only at fr. 32 does the section on *longa consuetudo* begin. Whatever Pindar's understanding of *nomos*, in the sixth century AD *nomos* was taken to be the equivalent of *lex. Senatus consulta*, decisions of the senate, are mentioned in fragments 9–12, mostly together with *leges. Leges* are not the same as *constitutiones principum*, imperial constitutions, which are the subject of the fourth title. *Lex* and *nomos* as its equivalent are defined as norms devised by men (*viri prudentes, Digest* 1,3,1) to regulate what happened frequently (*Digest* 1,3,3–6), not concerning individuals but people generally (*Digest* 1,3,8). In this light the second fragment with Pindar's, or rather, Chrysippus' words, is an exception and almost an interruption of the sequence. To be sure, the words were duly noted, but as we shall see, they were hardly the anchor and linchpin on which the essence of 'law' depended. They even almost disappeared.

The *Basilika* of *c.* 900 reorder the Greek versions of the Justinian legislation. Book One consists of a *titulus unicus* on the Holy Trinity and the Orthodox Faith. Book Two contains a series of titles about law in general. The first one of these incorporates the beginning of the *Digest* and carries the following rubrica: Περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ νόμου καὶ μακρᾶς συνηθείας, the Greek translation of the rubrics of *Digest* 1,1 *De iustitia et iure* and *Digest* 1,3 *De legibus etc.*. (*Digest* 1,2 *De origine iuris* is passed by entirely.) *Digest* 1,3,2 is found in *Basilika* 2,1,14. The text continues the previous fragment and together fragments 13–14 represent *Digest* 1,3,1–2:

[1] Νόμος ἐστὶ κοινὸν παράγγελμα, φρονίμων ἀνδρῶν δόγμα, ἑκουσίων καὶ ἀκουσίων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐπιστροφή, πόλεως συνθήκη κοινή. [2] Ἔστι δὲ καὶ θεῖον εὕρημα.	[1] Law is a common precept, an opinion of sensible men, a correction of voluntary and involuntary mistakes, the common covenant of a city. [2] It is also a divine invention.

Chrysippus and his *nomos-basileus* have disappeared altogether. It is true that he returns in an annotation in a manuscript now in Paris, a scholion that in my view goes back to the sixth century,[6] but for the moment we note that the *Basilika* text had dropped the law as king. What remains is a harmless definition – no word of the emperor.

Nomos in the *Eisagoge*

I would not have spent so much time on all this if, in an entirely different line of reasoning, *nomos* of Pindar's fragment, understood as 'the will of Zeus' but reinterpreted in a Christian context, had not manifested itself elsewhere. The prooimion of the *Eisagoge*, dating to the end of the ninth century, contains a passage about the relation between *nomos* and *basileus* which breathes new life into the combination. It is generally held that the *Eisagoge* is to be attributed to the patriarch Photios.[7] The prooimion together with the second and third titles are witness to Photios' view on the relations of church and state and the role of *nomos*. These texts present an ambitious, intellectual programme that has little to do with political reality, nor, as far as I can see, did they find an echo in contemporary or later writings.

The prooimion of the *Eisagoge* has always been perceived as being different from what these prefaces usually offer.[8] It does not claim that this new legislation is going to correct intolerable evil or words to that effect, but instead purports to set out a model of the state, in which *nomos* is given a place in relation to emperor and patriarch. In 1994 Andreas Schminck made a very interesting contribution to the study of the prooimion,[9] in which he starts with the *nomos basileus* passage, but argues that Photios was not taking his cue from (a Greek translation of) the *Digest*. Here, according to Schminck, Photios was following the philological and Hellenic rather than the Roman and legal tradition, in which he drew on Plato, Joannes Stobaeus, Charondas, Zaleukos, and also Basilius and Eusebius of Caesarea. Indeed, *the* nomos in the prooimion was different from *a* nomos in the substantive part of the law and therefore also in the forty titles of the *Eisagoge*, just as writing a *prooimion tou nomou* ('prologue to the law') was not the same as to promulgate a *nomos*, i.e., to legislate. The latter is what ordinary mortals associate with law, the former what belongs to the province of intellectual debate in various contexts. I quote in translation from the German a key inference from Schminck's interesting argument:

> Thus in the *Eisagoge* it is not the power of the emperor to legislate that is being emphasized, but his *ennomos epistasia* (*Eis.* 2,1), his 'authority within the law', whereas on the other hand the patriarch as the living image of Christ, the lawgiver of the New Testament, comes close to the *empsychos nomos*, the 'living law'.

He then reasonably concludes that this twofold idea of *nomos* perfectly serves to place the patriarch above the emperor, comparing in *Eis*. 3,8 the emperor with the body and the patriarch with the soul. For patriarch, of course, read Photios.

In this light it is reasonable to assume that the titles on the emperor and the patriarch should fit this 'constitutional' model and that the idea of *nomos* would spill over from the prooimion into the substantive part. The title on the patriarch is entirely original in that it does not at all go back to the Justinianic legislation,

and neither do the first five chapters of the title on the emperor. It is worth quoting Schminck's last paragraph:

> Thus, in the end, the law is *basileus*, a *basileus* rivalling with the *autokrator-basileus*, and, since he is 'given from God' and consequently enjoys additional authority, claims precedence over the *autokrator-basileus*.[10]

This understanding of the idea 'law' is completely alien to Roman legal thought. I would like to add that it has never become Byzantine, or perhaps I should say, 'mainstream' Byzantine, either. The first five chapters of Title 2 on the emperor are unique to the *Eisagoge*, the other chapters are already found in *Digest* 1,3 and return in the *Basilika*. Title 3 on the patriarch is entirely original. Together with the prooimion they stand in splendid isolation. I stick to my words of 2001 when, after a seminar on the prooimion of the *Eisagoge* that produced a full commentary, I wrote in an appendix:

> with the exception of the prooimia, there is no Byzantine reflection on law as a social and political phenomenon. In fact, it has proved to be difficult to know to what extent Photius' statement about the role of the law in the prooimion of the Eisagoge was original. It is very hard to ascertain what the Byzantines thought about their legal system.[11]

No wonder that the *Basilika*, the compilation of which took place in Photios' lifetime, passed over Chrysippus' words. Photios may have understood them – through Plato – as just explained. I am sure neither Tribonian nor Justinian would have agreed, nor, I suspect, the emperors Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912). Byzantine legal discourse, as far as we know, simply ignored it. But, one may protest, how can a *nomos* in the ordinary sense, that is a binding, formal law, have been promulgated that is so much at variance with legal orthodoxy? Was the *Eisagoge* perhaps, as Juan Signes Codoñer suggests, a draft that never made it to the statute book?[12] However this may be, these passages of the *Eisagoge* were a novelty, never to be repeated, and let us not forget that the rest of the *Eisagoge*, i.e. 95 per cent of its substantive law, was legally entirely orthodox. It repeated, or, according to Schminck's view, preceded, the content of the *Procheiron*. Business continued as usual.

The emperor and the law

As to the relation between the emperor and the law, the emperor is supposed to be in control of the law and to be the only source of the law, indeed, to be the law. Whatever its philosophical basis, that imperial control of the law is not in dispute. Rather it is the role of legislation and law that has changed over the centuries, as has been shown by Marie Theres Fögen in an article of 1987.[13] If I may quote my own summary of this paper elsewhere:[14]

> After a health-warning against approaching the subject with a modern concept of 'Gesetz', she analyses Justinian's and Leon's Novels and the 'legal dispositions' ('rechtliche Anordnungen') of the Palaeologues in order to find an answer to one question: 'What functions did the legal dispositions, that is, dispositions bearing on law, of Byzantine emperors have?'. For Justinian's Novels Fögen infers 'an amazing similarity with the tasks of modern statutes'. Leo's Novels, on the other hand, are more symbol than reality. The Palaeologue emperors, finally, take mostly individual measures, award privileges, in short, abandon attempts at legislation in the traditional sense of the word. This rough sketch, which hardly gives a fair representation of Fögen's rich argument, will at least convey the impression of major changes in the function of legislation in Byzantium over the ages.

The law, the emperor and the lawyers

It is time to leave the 'conceptual heaven' with its abstractions and descend to the earth. Millar's *Emperor in the Roman World* studied the workings of the imperial legal machinery and the role of the emperor therein. Millar, and several others, have paid attention in particular to the practice of petitions to the emperor and the answers in the form of rescripts. The role of jurists, first as independent advisers and later in the imperial chancery, had been the subject of several studies by Tony Honoré,[15] about which Millar wrote a review article in the *Journal of Roman Studies* that is still worth reading.[16] In the handling of these petitions we often observe the interaction between emperor and jurists from close quarters. For Byzantium after Justinian this is unfortunately much more difficult. Rosemary Morris contributed to a volume on petitions in Byzantium a chapter with the significant title 'What did the *epi ton deeseon* ['master of petitions'] actually do?'.[17] From her well-argued investigation it transpires that he was fulfilling roughly the same role as the *a libellis* (the Latin title of the same official) had done in antiquity: dealing with petitions, but also providing access to the emperor. If we remember the changing role of legislation alluded to above, the latter function must have been at least as important as the former: the *epi ton deeseon* must have been a channel through which to effect obtaining the desired privileges. The point to keep in mind is, unsurprisingly, the fact that the emperor was always able to take it upon himself to perform tasks that, properly speaking, should have fallen to a functionary at lower level. This is borne out by the testimony of the *Peira*, still our best and most informative witness about law in practice in the eleventh century, in which the emperor makes occasional appearances.

The *Peira* hardly needs an introduction.[18] This collection of cases heard by Eustathios Rhomaios (first half of the eleventh century) in the Court of the Hippodrome, reported and edited by an unknown assistant, is our best witness of contemporary legal practice. A cursory reading helps to illustrate my observation

about the emperor in court cases. Dieter Simon describes the competence of the Court of the Hippodrome.[19] Here is, in translation, the central point at issue:

> From [the court] appeal was open only to the emperor himself. Insofar as he did not take the decision himself, he referred the case back to one or more Justices of the Hippodrome, who had not been involved in the original decision, *and reserved for himself the approval of the decision* [my italics].

When his presence is noted, it does not seem to have been considered remarkable: he is there and takes a part. Sometimes he pronounces judgment (15,4), sometimes he refers the case (15,9). In 17,19 one may get the impression that 'the emperor himself condemned', but the *sigma* of *autos* in the Zepos edition is in reality a *nu*, so it is simply 'the emperor condemned him', which makes it less noteworthy as a testimony of the participation of the emperor. (This only emphasizes the desirability of a new edition.) At the end of the day, the emperor is in absolute control. There are virtually no cases that, given sufficient persistence, contacts and money, could not eventually be brought before the emperor.[20]

Basileus nomos

From this brief reconnaissance of legislation and legal practice it may be inferred that for the philosopher the *nomos* may have been *basileus*, but that in reality the *basileus* dictated the *nomos*. Or rather, that to the philosopher and the lawyer *nomos* was a very different animal. The ordinary citizen, I would suggest, had to deal with the *nomos* of the lawyers, and ultimately with that of the *basileus*, who not only had a monopoly of legislation, but also had the last word in court. Indeed, for practical purposes the *basileus* was the *nomos*, and other considerations were superfluous.

Notes

1 For a reconstruction of this work in 16 books from fragments used in Justinian I's *Digest*, see Lenel 1889: 652–675.
2 Lloyd-Jones 1972.
3 Lloyd-Jones 1972: 55.
4 Lloyd-Jones 1972: 56.
5 Most recently, Stolte 2015: 356.
6 Scholion 1 ad B. 2,1,14 (Scheltema ed. 1953: 4.19). After the promulgation of the *Basilika* explanations stemming from sixth-century commentaries on the *Digest* were added as scholia to the text.
7 Troianos 2011: 240–246, esp. 243, and Troianos 2015: 156–160, with full bibliography.
8 More than any other prooimion it sets out a particular theological-philosophical theory of the law, which reflected Photios' views (for literature, see previous footnote).
9 Schminck 1994.
10 Schminck 1994: 72.

11 Aerts *et al.* 2001: 145 (Appendix IV: 'Law and legislation in Byzantine political thought').
12 Signes Codoñer 2007.
13 Fögen 1987.
14 Stolte 2009: 77.
15 Honoré 1994, and Honoré 1982.
16 Millar 1986. See also Millar 2006.
17 Morris 2004.
18 Text in Zepos and Zepos 1931: 5–260. A long-awaited and much-needed new edition now seems to be in the offing. Of the extensive bibliography I mention but two: Simon 1973; Oikonomides 1986.
19 Simon 1973: 8–9.
20 Cf. Simon 1973: 9–10, about the Court of the Hippodrome as a *Klassengericht*.

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9

THE EMPEROR AT WAR

Duties and ideals

Frank R. Trombley and Shaun Tougher[1]

Introduction

The prerogatives and duties of the Byzantine emperor in conducting warfare have seldom been investigated as constitutional functions.[2] Similarly, the customary practice of emperors engaging in actual military operations has been examined even less often, barring vague narrative treatments.[3] Something of the emperor's tasks as organiser of war is suggested by an emperor himself, Theodore Laskaris II (1254–1258), in one of his letters:

> Care for my troops rouses me from my bed at day-break. I receive ambassadors in audience during the morning and then I inspect the army. I devote the middle of the day to my studies. Afterwards, mounted on horseback, I receive the petitions of those who have not been able to join others within the gates of the palace. In the evening I execute judgements . . . and at night I busy myself with the details of the campaign (lit. 'military operations and logistics': τὰ τῆς ἐκστρατείας καὶ τῆς ἀποσκευῆς).[4]

The aim of this chapter is to attempt to develop an understanding of the practical side of the conducting of military operations by emperors, drawing primarily on Middle Byzantine texts. It emerges that there were strong ideals about the duties of the emperor in warfare, and that emperors were assessed according to their perceived performance of these roles.[5] These assessments draw on rhetorical commonplaces, but nonetheless reflect something of the reality of the expectation of emperors. Byzantium was a militarised society, and the majority of its emperors were militarily active.

Duties and ideals

As Byzantium was the continuation of the Roman empire, the military role of the emperor was strongly enshrined in its political and cultural traditions.[6] It is notable that three of the five main competitors selected by the emperor Julian

(361–363) in his *Caesars* to vie for the acclaim of the gods as being the best Roman emperor were chosen on the grounds of 'being the greatest warriors' (ὡς πολεμικωτάτους): Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Trajan.[7] The fact that the other two competitors, Marcus Aurelius and Constantine, were also militarily active – and in the case of Constantine successfully so despite the denigration of Julian – is revealing, a point further emphasised by the gods allowing one Greek to compete as well: Alexander the Great. Julian himself nicely illustrates the fact that by the fourth century emperors were expected to be active military men: plucked from a life of education to be Caesar to his cousin Constantius II (337–361), Julian found himself campaigning in Gaul, then when sole emperor undertook his infamous invasion of Persia.[8] While Roman emperors had always been expected to have a military role, in the third century AD there arose the phenomenon of the soldier-emperor, a man who became emperor having risen through the ranks of the army.[9] A famous example is Diocletian (284–305), in whose Tetrarchy the career of Constantine I was forged.[10] It was not always the case that in Byzantium the emperor had to be an active soldier. After the death of Theodosius I (379–395) there followed a sequence of emperors who did not campaign in person, from Theodosius' young sons Arcadius (395–408) and Honorius (395–423) to Justin II (565–578).[11] This sequence of course included Justinian I (527–565), under whom the reconquest of the West was undertaken, reflecting the fact that even if emperors were not active generals themselves they still had a role to play in managing the conduct of warfare. From the reign of Tiberius II (578–582) to that of Basil I (867–886) most Byzantine emperors were militarily active, until the advent of the reign of Leo VI (886–912). This emperor again embraced a sedentary city-based role, an identity also followed by his brother Alexander (912–913), his son Constantine VII (913–959), and his grandson Romanos II (959–963).[12] This phase was only reversed under the generals-turned-emperors Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and John I Tzimiskes (969–976), which resulted in the fearsome figure of the emperor turned general, Basil II (976–1025). Despite, or perhaps because of, his non-active military role Leo VI still laid claim to military expertise, writing his famous *Taktika*, a substantial manual of military advice for his generals, running to twenty constitutions.[13] This *Taktika* drew heavily on previous texts, primarily those of Onasander, Aelian and the emperor Maurice (582–602), but revived the genre of *Taktika*, and spawned others in the tenth century, including the *Praecepta militaria* ascribed to Nikephoros II Phokas, and the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, a general and ally of Basil II.[14] Like his father Leo VI, Constantine VII was also keen to emphasise his identity as war leader despite his lack of an active campaigning role; this can be seen, for instance, in the existence of military harangues written in his name.[15] In the second of these harangues, dated to 958, Constantine even promised to participate in the upcoming campaign against the Arabs, together with his son Romanos.[16] Thus the military role of the Byzantine emperor was a fundamental one, one that could even be played by emperors who were not militarily active.

The role of the emperor as war leader and commanding general can be investigated through close analysis of the narrative sources and to some extent the tactical manuals, which describe his activities when conducting military operations. The most important role played by the emperor as commanding general was that of supreme planner and decision-maker. He was often the only person fully conversant with the aims of policy lying behind a particular operation. On the other hand, he will have relied on locally posted commanders – the *strategos, doux, katepano* or *kleisourarches* – for information about the march routes, state of repair of fortresses and bridges, food and water supplies, fodder, road conditions and other aspects of regional geography. Emperors at times insisted on the presence of civilian officials during operations. This is indicated in relation to the infamous Byzantine defeat at Mantzikert in 1071 under the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1068–1071), in the account provided by Michael Attaleiates:

> [O]thers had been cut down in the battle itself and the flight, among whom was Leon, who was *epi ton deeseon*, a man notable for his knowledge and speaking ability; also the *magistros* and *protasekretis* Eustratios Choirosphaktes. Among those who were captured was the *protovestes* Basileios Maleses, the emperor's closest associate, invested with the office of the *logothetes* of the waters, who was also exceptional in terms of his experience and speaking ability.[17]

Decisions were made in light of all these factors, plus the readiness of the assembled forces, condition of the soldiers' horses and equipment, and meteorological conditions. The fullest description of these activities is again provided by Michael Attaleiates, in his account of the expedition Romanos IV conducted against northern Syria in 1068 and eastern Anatolia in 1069 (*Historia* 17 and 18).

The emperor was expected to make a show of leadership in these situations, particularly in critical circumstances when the situation was in doubt. Michael Psellos in his *Chronographia* comments on this, in relation to the military inactivity of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055). He observes, 'The people [of Constantinople] . . . wanted to see a soldier-emperor, a man who would endanger his own life on their behalf and put an end to barbarian incursions' (βουλομένους στρατιώτην ἰδεῖν αὐτοκρατόρα, σφῶν τε προσκινδυνεύοντα καὶ τὰς ἐπιδρομὰς τῶν βαρβάρων ἀνείργοντα).[18] Although, as noted, emperors did not necessarily command armies in person this concept was deeply embedded in constitutional ideology, as seen for instance in a victory acclamation in the *Book of Ceremonies*, designating the emperor as the 'downfall of the barbarians' (ἀλλοφύλων κατάπτωσις ὄντως) and 'wall of the state' (τεῖχος τῆς πολιτείας).[19] Psellos' portrait of emperor Basil II conforms more to this ideal; he observes that 'He spent the greater part of his reign serving as a soldier (στρατεύων), guarding our frontiers (τά τε ἡμέτερα φρουρῶν ὅρια) and keeping the barbarian marauders at bay'.[20] The risks to Basil's life, limb and health are expressed in a much longer section:

> On his expeditions against the barbarians, Basil did not follow the customary practice of other emperors, setting out in the middle of spring and returning home at the end of summer. For him the time to return was when the task at hand was accomplished. He endured the rigours of winter and the heat of summer with equal indifference. He disciplined himself against thirst. In fact, all his natural desires were kept under control, and the man was hard as steel.[21]

Psellos' idealised portrait of Basil, however, obscures the fact that operations in the Taurus highlands and northern Syria were normally conducted in the autumn anyway, when there was rich forage for horses and pack animals and cooler temperatures for fighting if pitched battles occurred. This is evident, for example in Romanos IV's expedition of 1068 against Hierapolis, which did not re-cross the Taurus mountains until January in the new year, and in the information Leo the Deacon records about the operations of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes in northern Syria; for instance, the expedition that saw the sack of Mopsuestia did not come to an end until January 965.[22] Similarly Yahya of Antioch records that the operations conducted by Niketas the *katepano* of Antioch against the fortress of al-Manīqa in Arab territory did not come to an end until 1 December 1031.[23] Psellos' generalisations about military affairs could be the product of court-centred understanding of provincial affairs and military operations, or of simply ignoring general facts in order to exalt Basil II.

Basil II's fulfilling of a military role was, however, of some moment. As indicated above, it marked the return of a Macedonian emperor to active military engagement, which had not occurred since the reign of the dynasty-founder Basil I, who had notably taken his eldest son and heir apparent Constantine on campaign with him to Syria in 878, and then celebrated a triumph with him in 879.[24] It seems that this reembracing of an active military role was a deliberate decision, perhaps as a result of a concern about possible disloyalty among elements in the army, or more generally a reaction to the sequence of military men who had become emperors alongside the Macedonians in the tenth century (the admiral Romanos Lekapenos, and the generals Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes). It is telling that early examples of Basil II's experience of pitched battle occurred against the usurper Bardas Phokas (nephew of Nikephoros Phokas), in the late 980s, at the battle of Chrysopolis (988) and the battle of Abydos (989).[25] Leo the Deacon relates that Basil II 'crossing the Hellespont . . . pitched the imperial tent on the plain before Abydos, drew up his troops daily and drilled them and debated how he should attack the rebel [Bardas Phokas]'.[26] This public display of imperial military leadership also extended to Basil's younger brother Constantine VIII, whom Psellos describes as being fitted out with a breastplate and long spear.[27] Psellos further reports that Constantine claimed that he himself had killed Bardas Phokas at the battle of Abydos.[28] These gestures were clearly related to regime survival.

Despite what Psellos asserted about the people of Constantinople's views of Constantine Monomachos he does note his performance at the time of the Rus attack on Constantinople in 1043: 'He himself, with a picked body of senators, spent the night at anchor in the actual harbour, not far from the shore'.[29] Monomachos, however, spent the actual engagement on dry land, with Psellos at his side; Psellos records that the emperor 'was seated on a hill which sloped gently down to the sea, watching the engagement from a distance' (ἐξ ἀπόπτου).[30] This emperor was indeed not risking his life for the people of Constantinople. Ironically though, having praised Basil II for his active military role and willingness to place himself in danger, Psellos mentions that when Constantine X Doukas (1059–1068) decided personally to take the field in the Balkans against the 'Mysians' and 'Triballi' (meaning the Pechenegs and Uzes, it seems), Psellos persuaded him to return to Constantinople and avoid fighting, observing that 'I snatched him from danger almost by main force'.[31] Psellos then vaguely refers to a victorious outcome thanks to a small force sent against them by the emperor.[32] Nevertheless Psellos asserts that the policies of Constantine X 'fell short of perfection':

> For example, international differences, according to his ideas, had to be settled, not by recourse to arms, but by the sending of gifts and by other tokens of friendship – for two reasons: in the first place, he would avoid having to spend the greater part of the imperial revenues on the army, and secondly his own manner of life would not be disturbed. Actually he was greatly mistaken in this, for, when the military organization broke down (τῆς στρατιωτικῆς καταλυομένης μερίδος), the power of our enemies increased and they became more active in opposition.[33]

Attaleiates argues this thesis in greater detail, with fairly specific observations about the state of the *banda* of the Anatolikon theme when Romanos IV mustered them and conducted an inspection in the spring of 1068.[34] These activities were part of customary practice, particularly when the emperor envisioned major campaigns on the eastern frontier. Basil I is described doing this and conducting training prior to his first operation against Chrysocheir and the Paulicians in 871. The *Life of Basil* is panegyrical and highly idealised, but points to the direct intervention of emperors in fostering the training of recruits:

> Now that domestic matters were running well for the emperor and in accordance with his pious goals pleasing to God, his deep solicitude for the state as a whole summoned him to foreign campaigns, so that he might by his own efforts, courage, and excellence extend the boundaries of his realm, force out his foes, and drive them far off. Nor did the emperor neglect that task. First of all, since military contingents had been reduced in strength owing to the cutting off of liberalities, stipends and imperial provision-monies issued to soldiers, he replenished these contingents by gathering and selecting new recruits, and strengthened

> them by providing what was needed in the form of both regular and extraordinary contributions. Second, he trained the recruits through exercises in tactics, made them toil without rest until they were thoroughly practiced in military drills, and imbued them with respect for discipline and regard for obedience. Only then did he set out with them on campaigns against the barbarians, in defense of [those who were] his fellow countrymen, kinsmen and subjects . . . This is why our noble emperor first subjected his military units (τὰ τάγματα τὰ στρατιωτικά) to exercise,[35] put them in a state of preparedness, mingled the newly recruited troops with the experienced ones, and made their sinews supple and their right hands strong through the bestowal of appropriate gifts. Only then did he engage the enemy in their company and was able to celebrate many triumphs and win countless victories.[36]

A detailed description of a muster is found in Attaleiates' history, when in 1068 Romanos IV found the forces of the Anatolikon in a poor state of military readiness:

> The unit commanders, along with the soldiers who made up the complement of each unit, assembled there after receiving orders. It was something to see the famous units and their commanders now composed of just a few men, and these bent over by poverty and lacking in proper weapons and warhorses. For a long time they had been neglected, since no emperor had gone on an expedition to the east for many years, and they had not received their allotted money for supplies, and little by little they were being defeated and routed by the enemy because they were in a miserable condition and unprepared to meet an attack. They had been driven to the absolute depths of misery and appeared cowardly, feeble, and absolutely useless for anything brave. Their very standards, as it were, silently proclaimed this condition, for they looked filthy as though they had been exposed to smoke, and those who marched behind them were few and pitiful.[37] It was truly depressing to those who considered from what source and by what means the army might be restored to its ancient condition and former worth and how long that would take, given that the men remaining in their units now were few and at a loss when it came to using weapons or maneuvering with their horses, and the young men had no combat experience.[38]

Byzantine military theory and practice was extremely sceptical about running the risks of pitched battles, a theme that recurs time and again in the tactical manuals. Emperors leading armies took all the usual security measures to avoid capture or death in battle. The tactical manuals as a rule require the commanding general – whether the emperor or one of his subordinates – to fight in the centre division of the deployment and to avoid personal combat as a matter of good practice, for if he were incapacitated, the direction of battle would collapse and the army would probably

be routed, suffering heavy casualties. Basil II appears to have followed this practice; Psellos observes 'He professed to conduct his wars and draw up the troops in line of battle, himself planning each campaign, but he preferred not to engage in combat personally. A sudden retreat might otherwise prove embarrassing'.[39] It is of some interest that Romanos IV led his army detachment down the throat of a concentration of Seljuk Turks at Mantzikert in 1071, but was captured after he had given the command for an orderly retirement; the centre division where he rode became separated from the two wing divisions, and then occurred the insubordination or supposed treason of Andronikos Doukas, who according to the tactical manuals was required to keep the second, rearward line that he commanded in nearby position as a rallying point if one or more of the divisions in the first line were routed.[40] Romanos IV was in the centre division consisting of the standard-bearers, his personal guards and the theme of Cappadocia; he correctly signalled retirement after a day-long pursuit of the retiring Turks, and engaged in personal combat only after this formation became encircled and was forced to fight at close quarters.[41] An emperor acting as commanding general always ran the risk of capture if the tactical engagement ended in debacle.

The rashness that Psellos attributes to Romanos IV is thus a libel of incompetence. Psellos' characterisation of the emperor's management of the battle is damning, despite him saying he refused to blame Romanos. Psellos, who claims that his own knowledge of military strategy and tactics was envied by the emperor,[42] asserts:

> when one reflects that a general, if he conforms to the accepted rules of strategy, must remain aloof from the battle-line, supervising the movement of his army and issuing the necessary orders to the men under his command, then Romanos' conduct on this occasion would appear foolish in the extreme, for he exposed himself to danger without a thought of the consequences.[43]

The tactical manuals – products of an imperially sanctioned authorship – do not object to the commanding general manoeuvring a full-size field army and directing the battle from his position in the centre division: they only object to his engaging in personal combat.[44] If the centre division had to be sent forward for shock action, the emperor, accompanied by his standard bearers and detachment of guards, should have stood behind and directed the battle from a rearward position as the centre division went forward in the direction of the enemy. This was not the situation at Mantzikert. Romanos IV became involved in personal combat for other reasons: the likely unreliability of the flanking divisions, Andronikos Doukas' wrongly conducted retirement of the second line, and the fact that the centre division was surrounded and nearly wiped out. Psellos' remarks are particularly ironic in light of his assertion, as has been noted, that the people of Constantinople wanted to see a soldier-emperor not unlike Basil II, a man who would endanger his own life on their behalf and put an end to barbarian incursions.

It is likely that Attaleiates wrote his history in part as a defence of the way Romanos IV had conducted military affairs, to set the record straight. At times he alludes to courtiers in an unfriendly way, and one suspects he has Psellos in mind, whom Attaleiates may have seen as not such a good adviser in military affairs.[45] Psellos mentions John Doukas' knowledge of tactical manuals; it is a glowing portrait that mentions classical strategists (Aelian and Apollodorus) but not more recent ones, e.g. Nikephoros Ouranos, whose tactical manual not only rephrased and updated the language of older Byzantine works but dealt with new tactical systems.[46]

The narrative sources sometimes identify the personality characteristics of emperors who successfully conducted military operations. Psellos makes indirect reference to Nikephoros II Phokas in characterising his nephew Bardas Phokas, the sometime ally of Basil II in the rebellions of the early years of his reign. This forms a distinct contrast to Psellos' description of John Doukas' knowledge of the ancient tactical manuals, or the genial portraits of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) and Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) that emerge from the works of Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates:

> this man Bardas reminded people of his uncle, the Emperor Nicephorus, for he was always wrapped in gloom, and watchful, capable of foreseeing all eventualities, of comprehending everything at a glance. Far from being ignorant of warlike manoeuvres, he was thoroughly versed in every type of siege warfare, every trick of ambush, every tactic of pitched battle.[47]

The virtue of *coup d'oeil*, the ability to take in an entire set of circumstances at a glance, particularly the topographical and built environment, is seen as characteristic of all 'great captains' and an essential skill in making tactical dispositions before battle.[48] It is thus that we see fighting emperors time and again, making a personal reconnaissance of enemy fortifications to be besieged, identifying with a trained eye the weak angles of defensive fire, dead ground, defensive artillery, and recent repairs to the fortifications that might suggest weak spots for targeting siege artillery.[49] Romanos IV rode round the fortifications of Mantzikert before the siege of 1071, alerting the Turks to his presence and becoming an obvious target for defensive artillery on the walls; these exercises were always risky. Alexios I made many a personal reconnaissance of barbarian campsites and tactical movements, particularly in the Balkans where he was fighting the Normans and the Pechenegs; while planning an ambush for the Normans in Thessaly in 1083, Alexios made local inquiries:

> he summoned one of the old men from Larissa and questioned him on the topography of the place. Turning his eyes in different directions and at the same time pointing with his finger, he carefully inquired where the terrain was broken by ravines, where dense thickets lay close to such places.[50]

Military necessity at times also required emperors to make arduous demands on the soldiery beyond their military skills. One such task was the construction and repair of fortifications. Some emperors were noted for making displays of physical strength themselves, a notable example being Basil I the Macedonian, celebrated for his strength. His biographer writes:

> When he came to the banks of the Euphrates, he beheld it swollen and overflowing in the summer season. Deeming it dishonourable and unworthy of his troops to set up camp by the crossing and wait for the river to subside, he determined to span it with a bridge, and everything was speedily readied for this task. As for himself, he sought to bring relief to his toiling troops and persuade them to endure their labors readily; at the same time [he sought] to subject himself in person [and] by his own will to the strain of labor; so that, should perchance some task present itself against his will, he would not find it an unfamiliar experience or one in which he would be lacking practice; and he eagerly joined his soldiers at their work and put heavy loads upon his shoulders and carried these loads to the bridge. At which time one could see three soldiers who together would be barely able to carry across a load equal to that which the emperor [alone] would lift with ease.[51]

Such ideal behaviour is urged in the *Taktika* of Basil's son Leo VI, when the emperor sums up the duty of the commanding general to share in the toils of his soldiers, to display a good example and fraternity:

> First, if you intend to carry out critical operations, O general, do not set yourself apart from the multitude of men laboring at their tasks. But you should take the lead in such operations and toil along with them in the work as best you can, whether you are digging trenches or piling up mounds of earth or undertaking siege operations or preparing weapons or machines or capturing forts. Moreover, if you think that some work that is useful and beneficial to the city or army should be done, then, with your own hands, be the first to get it started. The soldiers, as though put to shame, will end up obeying you more fervently and will complete the project more readily. If a scarcity of supplies causes a problem, you be the first to show your patient endurance and self-control, in order that you may bring the men under your command to deal more readily and easily with the crisis.[52]

According to Leo the Deacon, when encamped by Antioch in 968 Niketas II Phokas announced his plan to build a fortress on a hill nearby, and 'then he put a rock on his shoulder . . . and climbed up the hill, ordering all the army to do the same'.[53] Nikephoros Choniates describes Manuel I Komnenos personally taking part in the men's work, when the town of Dorylaion and the fortress of Souvleon

were reconstructed in 1176, carrying large blocks on his back, and in 1180 enduring great physical hardships during the forced march to relieve Claudiopolis which lay under continuous Turkish siege.[54]

Risks were present in almost any military engagement. Emperors, whom acclamations preserved in the *Book of Ceremonies* hail as '"Incomparable soldiers, champions of the empire"' (ἀσύγκριτοι στρατιῶται, οἰκουμένης οἱ πρόμαχοι) who '"scattered foreign nations with divinely-inspired weapons of piety"', took steps to secure divine support for their military activities.[55] It is related in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus that during the siege of Constantinople by Thomas the Slav in 821–822, Michael II (820–829) was seen 'fixing the battle standard on the roof of the church of the Theotokos, seeking and receiving from thence power over his enemy' whilst his son and co-emperor Theophilos went 'round all the city with the clergy, bearing the life-giving wood of the Cross and the garment of the all-pure mother of Christ our God'.[56] Psellos reports that Basil II clasped an icon of the Mother of God in his left hand as his army withstood the charge of Bardas Phokas' rebel army at the battle of Abydos in 989.[57] After Romanos III Argyros' expedition to northern Syria was routed in battle and the Arabs plundered the Byzantine camp, the emperor succeeded in rallying some troops on a mountain ridge where an icon of the Theometor was returned to him: Psellos describes this as 'the image which Roman emperors habitually carry with them on campaign as a guide (lit. 'strategos') and guardian of all the army. This alone had not been taken by the enemy'.[58] The sight of the emperor poised with the icon atop the ridge enabled him to rally fleeing soldiers. Anna Komnene observes that Alexios I Komnenos, perhaps the most battle-experienced of any emperor before or after, made similar provision when he personally led operations; in 1087 facing the 'Scythians' (Pechenegs) at the front of his own line, Alexios held a sword in one hand and in the other the *omophoron* (cape) of the Mother of the Word.[59]

After military victories emperors took care to acknowledge the divine support they had received. The *Life of Basil* records thus the actions of Basil I on his return from his first expedition against Melitene:

> He entered through the Golden Gate, as ancient emperors of the most glorious Rome had done upon their triumphal returns; received the cheers of victory and shouts of acclamations from the people; and, just as he was after the campaign, he straightaway betook himself to the great temple of the Wisdom of God, to offer prayers and give due thanks. And crowned with the garland of victory by the patriarch of that time, he returned to the palace.[60]

Similarly, Leo the Deacon describes how when John I Tzimiskes returned to Constantinople following his campaign against the Rus in 971 (which resulted in the annexation of part of Bulgaria) the citizens greeted him outside the city walls, and presented him with a chariot drawn by a white horse for him to ride on to lead the triumphal procession. John, however:

> refused to mount on the chariot, but placed on the chariot's golden throne an icon that he brought from Mysia [meaning Bulgaria] of the Mother of God, holding in Her arms the theanthropic Word, and placed beneath it the purple garments of the Mysians and the crowns. And he followed behind, mounted on a fine steed . . . Thus he led the triumphal procession through the middle of the city . . . and entered the great church of the Wisdom of God. And after offering up prayers of thanksgiving, and dedicating to God the splendid crown of the Mysians as a gift from the first spoils, he went to the palace.[61]

Concerning Alexios I Komnenos, his daughter records his response to a dream he had in which an icon of St. Demetrios spoke to him, promising victory:

> [After the dream] he invoked the martyr and gave a pledge, moreover, that if it was granted to him to conquer his enemies [the Normans], he would visit the shrine [of St. Demetrios] and dismounting from his horse some stades from the town of Thessaloniki he would come on foot at a slow pace and would venerate him in the appropriate fashion.[62]

Emperors had a wide variety of administrative functions too in fulfilling their military role: the tasks of overseeing military procurement, financing the soldiers' pay and appointing suitable senior officers were all important tasks. Leo V (813–820) was remembered critically for not distributing the pay to the soldiers when he was *strategos* of the Armeniakon theme.[63] In the eleventh century Kekaumenos in his *Advice and Anecdotes* (also known as the *Strategikon*)[64] reminds the emperor to keep soldiers' pay up to date:

> Take great care of your soldiers. Don't cut their pay; for the soldier who receives from you is selling you his own blood. Give them titles, but not to all of them, but to those who have been efficient. Don't let the foreigners and Romans who are on guard about the Palace get behind in their pay, but let them receive their rations (*siteresia*) in abundance each and every month, and their provisions, and their pay, intact.[65] Favour them, and you won't be conspired against by them. But, if they are in arrears of pay, they certainly want to go off to where they can feed, and, turning against you, they will become your implacable enemies, and, from then on, they will not desert to you, remembering how they experienced nothing good at your hands; but, instead, they will subvert even those who are loyal to you, and make them revolt from you; and then you will repent, without doing (yourself) any good.[66]

Kekaumenos' statement can be read as a response to the failure of the regimes of Constantine X Doukas and Michael VII Doukas to maintain army pay, reflected also by Attaleiates. Kekaumenos' bitter opposition to appointing barbarians to

high military command – a process particularly notable from the third quarter of the eleventh century onwards – was an important thread in the discourse about distrust of barbarians; he writes:

> For whenever you honour the foreigner of the vulgar class, who arrives, as primicerius (*primikerios*), or general (*strategos*), what worthy command do you have to give to the Roman? Certainly you will make him an enemy. But, also, in this man's country, when they hear that he has reached such an honour and office, they will all laugh, and say: 'We considered him here worth nothing, but, going off to Romania, he has met with such honour. As it seems, in Romania there is not a competent man, and for this reason, our man has been exalted; if the Romans were efficient, they would not have promoted this man to such a great height'.[67]

All this may have been true in the mind of a Byzantine provincial magnate but, for example, the Latin heavy cavalry became an increasingly important component in the armies assembled by Alexios I, who recruited Latin defectors from the first years of his reign and kept them with himself in the centre division of Byzantine deployment.[68]

Conclusion

The military role of the Byzantine emperor was a highly important aspect of the duties expected of him, as the ruler of the Roman empire following in the footsteps of such distinguished ancestors as Augustus, Trajan and Diocletian. It is telling that the Byzantine empire originates with Constantine I (306–337), one of the most successful generals of his day, and terminates with Constantine XI (1449–1453), fighting to the end to save the empire. To execute the military role, however, the emperor did not necessarily have to be active in the field himself; as the examples of Justinian I and Leo VI show, the non-campaigning emperor was still the focal point of military organisation and authority, organising, directing and advising his forces. Most emperors, however, were militarily active, taking to the field with various degrees of direct involvement in battle. The tactical manuals urged caution about generals – emperors or not – putting themselves at risk, but some emperors, such as Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, did lead from the front. Basil II serves as a striking example of an emperor who deliberately cast himself as an active military leader, immortalised in the later portrait of Psellos, but also in the famous frontispiece of his eponymous psalter, where he is shown as a triumphant warrior, dressed in military garb and holding spear and sword, his success sanctioned by God and his angelic and sainted agents.[69] As has been seen in this chapter, emperors are regularly depicted and assessed as war leaders and active generals in Byzantine histories and chronicles. These narratives reflect ideals of behaviour drawn from other historical writing and the

rich tradition of military manuals. As such one clearly sees accounts of emperors at war falling into rhetorical patterns, emperors being judged successful or unsuccessful military leaders through their behaviour in a range of duties: organising, directing and funding the army, participating in campaigns, providing leadership by example, demonstrating military expertise and intelligence, and securing and acknowledging divine support for military activities and successes. Nevertheless, such accounts still reflect something of the reality of the military role and duties expected of the Byzantine emperor.

Notes

1 Sadly, Frank Trombley died in December 2015, before the completion of this volume.
2 An exception is the analysis provided by Treitinger 1956.
3 It is a shame that Taxiarchis Kolias did not have time to publish his 'The Byzantine emperor as warrior' in J. Koder and I. Stouraitis, eds., *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion* (2012): 7 n. 2. One hopes that the subject of the emperor is addressed in I. Stouraitis, ed., *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300–1204* (forthcoming).
4 Ed. Festa 1898: 58.63–75, trans. Angold 1975: 151.
5 For Late Byzantine attitudes to the military role of emperors see the comments by Savvas Kyriakidis (Chapter 14, this volume).
6 On the Roman emperor and the army see Campbell 1984.
7 Julian, *Caesars* 317b, ed. trans. Wright 1913: 368–369.
8 On Julian see for instance Tougher 2007.
9 See for instance Lee 2007: esp. 21–30; Hebblewhite 2017: esp. 8–32. There is no dedicated treatment of the imperial role in warfare in the recent two-volume *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*: Sarantis and Christie, eds., 2013.
10 See for instance Rees 2004.
11 See for instance Lee 2007: esp. 30–37.
12 See Tougher 1998.
13 For text, translation and commentary see Dennis 2014, and for extended commentary Haldon 2014.
14 See for instance McGeer 2008.
15 See Markopoulos 2012. See also the comments by Prerona Prasad in her chapter in this volume.
16 Markopoulos 2012: 48–49, 52.
17 Attaleiates, *Historia* 20.29, ed. and trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 302–303.
18 Psellos, *Chronographia* 6.104, ed. Renauld 1928: 18.27–29, trans. Sewter 1966: 209–210. Treitinger 1956, 170.
19 *De cer.* 1.83, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 383. Noted by Treitinger 1956: 170.
20 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.31, ed. Renauld 1926: 20.25–27, trans. Sewter 1966: 46.
21 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.32, ed. Renauld 1926: 20.1–8, trans. Sewter 1966: 46.
22 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 3.11, ed. Hase 1828: 53.14–54.4, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 102–103.
23 Ed. and French trans. Kratchkovsky, Micheau and Troupeau 1997: 512–513.
24 *Vita Basilii* 46, ed. trans. Ševčenko 2011: 165. 'taking along his eldest son Constantine, he set out with him against Syria, so as to give that cub of noble race a taste for slaying the enemy and to be himself his teacher in tactics and manly valor in the face of peril'; Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 140–147 (*De cer.* 1, Appendix, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012:

498–503). According to Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 3.6, ed. Hase 1828: 45.4–5, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 95, when Nikephoros Phokas offered to become emperor in 963 one of the things he committed to do was 'oversee [the] physical training' (σωμασκήσοντα) of Basil II and Constantine VIII. Leo also describes how once he had become emperor Nikephoros gave military training to the servants and household retainers who attended on him: *Historia* 3.9, ed. Hase 1828: 50.21–51.5, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 100–101.

25 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 10.9, ed. Hase 1828: 173.12–175.5, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 215–217; Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.14, ed. Renauld 1926: 9, trans. Sewter 1966: 35.

26 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 10.9, ed. Hase 1828: 174.15–18, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 216. On tents and the idea of the 'campaign palace' see Lynn Jones' Chapter 16 in this volume.

27 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.14, ed. Renauld 1926: 9, trans. Sewter 1966: 35.

28 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.16, ed. Renauld 1926: 10–11, trans. Sewter 1966: 36.

29 Psellos, *Chronographia* 6.93, ed. Renauld 1928: 10, trans. Sewter 1966: 201.

30 Psellos, *Chronographia* 6.93, ed. Renauld 1928: 10, trans. Sewter 1966: 202.

31 Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.23, ed. Renauld 1928: 149, trans. Sewter 1966: 341.

32 See also the account of Attaleiates, *Historia* 14.5–9, ed. and trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 150–157.

33 Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.17–18, ed. Renauld 1928: 146, trans. Sewter 1966: 338–339.

34 Attaleiates, *Historia* 17.2–3, ed. and trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 188–193.

35 The term 'military units' (τὰ τάγματα τὰ στρατιωτικά) surely refers to the theme armies, and not guards' formations stationed in Constantinople: Stouraitis 2009: 108–109. The training, some of it personally supervised by Basil I, is therefore likely to have taken place in the nearer themes of Asia Minor.

36 *Vita Basilii* 36, ed. trans. Ševčenko 2011: 132–135. This begins the section of the *Life of Basil* on the emperor's military expeditions, running from Chapters 37–71, ed. trans. Ševčenko 2011: 136–247.

37 Dirty standards would have posed serious problems in engagements, their colour and symbols on them being difficult to recognise. Cf. Grosse 1924. The passage is remarked on by Dennis 1981: 57.

38 Attaleiates, *Historia* 17.2, ed. and trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 188–191. Romanos IV is likely to have mustered the themes in the vicinity of Amorion-Polybotos, as this area had the sprawling grasslands necessary for foddering many thousands of horses, mules and oxen: personal observation of F.R. Trombley, 3 September 2014.

39 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.33, ed. Renauld 1926: 20–21, trans. Sewter 1966: 46–47.

40 Attaleiates, *Historia* 20.23–25, ed. and trans. Kaldellis and Krallis 2012: 290–299. On Mantzikert see also Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.19–22, ed. Renauld 1928: 161–162, trans. Sewter 1966: 354–356.

41 Episodes of near capture of an emperor in battle are met in relation to Theophilos (829–842) fighting against the Arabs, the first at a battle at an unknown location *c.* 832–836, and the second at the battle of Dazimon in 838: Theophanes Continuatus, The Reign of Theophilos 24 and 31–32, ed. trans. Featherstone and Signes Codoñer 2015: 166–169, 182–187.

42 Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.16, ed. Renauld 1928: 160, trans. Sewter 1966: 353.

43 Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.21, ed. Renauld 1928: 162, trans. Sewter 1966: 355.

44 See for instance Leo VI, *Taktika* 14.3, ed. trans. Dennis 2014: 290–291, with the commentary of Haldon 2014: 275–276.

45 On the relationship between Attaleiates and Psellos and their histories see Krallis 2012: 71–114. Krallis asserts that 'the *History* is a point-by-point refutation of the *Chronographia*'s defamatory account of Romanos IV Diogenes' career' (p. 81), and cites

an example of Attaleiates contradicting military advice offered by Psellos (p. 89). Krallis also analyses Attaleiates' treatment of the military efforts of Romanos IV (pp. 126–134).

46 Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.16, ed. Renauld 1928: 181, trans. Sewter 1966: 376. Psellos also asserts John Doukas' knowledge of various battle formations, and adds that he 'knows all about wall-fighting, cavalry skirmishing, the arrangement of infantry appropriate to different circumstances or different terrains': Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.17, ed. Renauld 1928: 182, trans. Sewter 1966: 377. On Ouranos and his work see for instance McGeer 2008: 79–83.

47 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.7, ed. Renauld 1926: 5–6, trans. Sewter 1966: 31.

48 See Luvaas 1966: 142.

49 One sees this in contemporary warfare as well: see for example Melvin 2010: 265.

50 *Alexiad* 5.5.5, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 155.48–52, trans. Sewter and Frankopan 2009: 141. Anna also describes Alexios' general Tatikios receiving military information from a peasant: *Alexiad* 6.10.3, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 189.72–75, trans. Sewter and Frankopan 2009: 172.

51 *Vita Basilii* 40, ed. trans. Ševčenko 2011: 142–145.

52 Leo VI, *Taktilka* 20.2, ed. trans. Dennis 2014: 536–539. This advice echoes that found in Maurice's *Strategikon* 8.1.1 and earlier manuals: see the commentary by Haldon 2014: 421.

53 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 4.11, ed. Hase 1828: 74.12–15, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 125.

54 Niketas Choniates, *Historia* 6, ed. van Dieten 1975: 176.55–59, 198.21–31, trans. Magoulias 1984: 99, 112.

55 *De cer.* 1.63, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 281. The acclamations are for the anniversary of the accession of emperors. Dagron 2010: 241, argues that the acclamations date to the reign of Constantine VII.

56 Theophanes Continuatus, The Reign of Michael II 14, ed. trans. Featherstone and Signes Codoñer 2015: 88–89. For comment on earlier episodes, from the time of Maurice and Heraclius (610–641), see Trombley 1998: 103–104.

57 Psellos, *Chronographia* 1.16, ed. Renauld 1926: 10, trans. Sewter 1966: 36.

58 Psellos, *Chronographia* 3.10, ed. Renauld 1926: 39, trans. Sewter 1966: 70.

59 *Alexiad* 7.3.9, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 212.81–83, trans. Sewter and Frankopan 2009: 194.

60 *Vita Basilii* 40, ed. trans. Ševčenko 2011: 146–148. Treitinger 1956: 150–151.

61 Leo the Deacon, *Historia* 9.12, ed. Hase 1828: 158.10–23, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 201. Leo the Deacon also records that the emperor 'changed the name of Dorystolon to Theodoroupolis in honor of the warrior and martyr Theodore the Stratelates', who was rumoured to have intervened in the battle against the Rus, and 'whom the emperor used to beseech for help in battle, and to protect and preserve him together with all the army': *Historia* 9.12 and 9.9, ed. Hase 1828: 158.1–2 and 154.7–9, trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005: 200 and 197.

62 *Alexiad* 5.5.6, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 156.62–66, trans. Sewter and Frankopan 2009: 142.

63 Theophanes Continuatus, The Reign of Leo the Armenian 4, ed. trans. Featherstone and Signes Codoñer 2015: 20–21.

64 On Kekaumenos and his text see the Sharing Ancient Wisdoms website for text, translation and commentary by Charlotte Roueché: http://www.ancientwisdoms.ac.uk/library/kekaumenos-consilia-et-narrationes/ (accessed 5.9.18). See now also Ransohoff 2018.

65 On provisions and pay see Glykatzi-Ahrweiler 1960: 7 n. 2, 8 n. 2, 12 n. 3, 25; Litavrin 2003: n. 809.

66 Ed. Litavrin 2003: 292–293 (§80), trans. Roueché 2013.

67 Ed. Litavrin 2003: 292–293 (§80), trans. Roueché 2013.

68 See for example *Alexiad* 5.5.1, 5.7.4, 6.1.4, 6.8.1, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: 153.83–88, 160.10–161.21, 169.43–170.62, 183.78–80, trans. Sewter and Frankopan 2009: 139, 146, 154–155, 167. On Alexios and the Latins see Chapter 6 by Jonathan Shepard in this volume.

69 The Psalter of Basil II, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. gr. 17, fol. 3r. See for instance Cutler 1976/1977, and Spatharakis 1976: 20–26.

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Part IV

IMPERIAL LITERATURE

Emperor as subject and author


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10

IMPERIAL PANEGYRIC

Hortatory or deliberative oratory?[1]

John Vanderspoel

In the late Roman and Byzantine periods, panegyric featured prominently in the lives of the inhabitants of towns and cities under Roman and Byzantine rule.[2] Indeed, the extent of the phenomenon is more than likely understated, for towns and cities almost certainly feted their visitors and sometimes their natives far more often than the existing record reveals.[3] Among other things, a speech, or a sermon by an acccomplished orator,[4] was an opportunity for entertainment and delight, and audiences in the late Roman and Byzantine periods were willing – far more than modern ones – to allow speeches to divert them for an hour and longer.[5] Much of the appeal was the performance itself, in the absence or irregular presence of other forms of entertainment, especially outside major cities.[6] Thus, Libanius wrote to Amphilochius, a former student who became bishop of Iconium, that he had heard reports, and did not doubt, that the bishop's audience responded to his oratory with resounding shouts of their own.[7] To what extent, we might then ask, was an ancient audience transported by the sounds of oratory more than by the meaning of the spoken words?[8] And even when the meaning was understood, was it more or less important than the performance itself?[9] How often was John Chrysostom cheered and applauded with great enthusiasm by crowds[10] that included the very aristocratic women whose dress and personal adornment he regularly and roundly castigated? His popularity presumably ensured his physical safety on occasion and prevented his targets from undertaking legal or other measures, in fear of incurring the hatred of the masses. But at least sometimes, his meaning was clearly understood: the empress Aelia Eudoxia's response to remarks widely regarded as scathing attacks had grave consequences for the bishop.[11]

Thus, the words could and did matter, if not to all, then at least to some audiences. For example, it has become quite traditional for scholars to point out that an address to a military dictator, in our context a Roman or Byzantine emperor, had better avoid the possibility of causing serious offence.[12] The combination of a love for oratorical performance with the need of the military dictators to be addressed and acknowledged by their public, it might be suggested, conspired to generate that peculiar brand of epideictic oratory called imperial panegyric. A style of oratory,

initially limited mostly to speeches of praise and blame whose subjects belonged to the realm of mythology and fantasy,[13] early on evolved to expressions of genuine gratitude on the part of Xenophon toward Agesilaus for the gift of an estate and to the depiction by Isocrates of Evagoras as a model ruler.[14] The historian, philosopher and soldier Xenophon (*c*. 430–*c*. 350 BC) was banished from Athens for pro-Spartan leanings and was given an estate at Skillous by the Spartan king Agesilaus; his gratitude generated his *Agesilaos*, an encomiastic biography of the king. Isocrates was an Athenian speechwriter who opposed the conclusion of peace with Persia in 387 BC,[15] as is clearly evident in his *Panegyrikos* ('Festival Speech'), where he calls upon the Greeks to continue the fight and argues that Athens, not Sparta, should lead the effort. His *Evagoras* was a eulogy of Evagoras, the king of Cyprus (r. 411–374 BC) who rejected the peace and continued his efforts against the Persians; Isocrates treats him as a model ruler, employing the themes that later became the standard outline for imperial panegyric. Thus in the later Roman period Menander Rhetor, as he is known,[16] outlined the parameters for a *basilikos logos* (lit. 'Speech for the King', but often 'imperial speech'), which was to treat ancestry, birth and education, great deeds, virtues and more – if those could be praised.

Before long, genuine gratitude on the one hand and the promulgation of a political perspective on the other devolved to speeches where the gratitude of an orator was less tangible and where the model ruler was the current ruler.[17] Flattery was not born from this union, of course, since humans had flattered each other before, but its stylized importation into public life may be regarded as the offspring of a marriage between the development of rhetorical techniques and the application of these to living rulers. Though only a few fragments of the performances are extant, the world of the Hellenistic rulers was the fertile ground where imperial panegyric took root. These Hellenistic rulers were frequently at odds with each other, often at war with their rivals, and sometimes at odds or at war with their subjects. The public performance of panegyric that praised their backgrounds, that envied their achievements, that heralded their right to rule was or could be crucial to establishing their rightful places at the head of their kingdoms and to promoting their claims as the rightful heads of additional territory. The goal of a Hellenistic panegyrist was not, or at least was not always, the mere mollification of a king by filling his ears with words of praise. The kings knew exactly what and who they themselves were; their subjects, however, and outsiders whom they might hope to subject, were not always as certain, and these were regularly the target of panegyric, precisely to make believers out of doubters. In essence, panegyric became the form of political oratory employed to create political support.

Kings did not deliver these political speeches themselves, but could use the services of ambitious young orators, or sometimes poets, who sought out royal courts in the hope of opportunities to compose and perform speeches and poems outlining the virtues and policies of the rulers in exchange for cash, gifts, influence or fame.[18] It does not necessarily follow, of course, that some of them did not genuinely support the ruler in question or the policies they explained. On a regular basis, communities chose to send a rhetorically qualified ambassador, perhaps

a town's leading teacher, to celebrate a ruler and proclaim the town's loyalty before requesting a favour.[19] No doubt, civic needs on occasion outweighed genuine distaste for rulers and their programmes, but that need not always be the case. At times, individuals offered thanks for favours granted by rulers.[20] In short, the panegyrists reflect a variety of backgrounds and goals; the details are, unfortunately, obscured by the dearth of extant speeches and of other specific information about the speakers and their speeches.[21] Even when the speeches survive, the orators often remain obscure.[22] Nevertheless, the speeches represent political interaction between ruler and ruled, the latter as communities in most cases, but also as individuals on occasion.

Eventually, epideictic oratory made its way into the world of the Roman emperors, where it continued to play its role as the medium for political interaction. Seen in this way, the modern scholar need no longer shudder at the thought of imperial panegyric as so much empty flattery and evidence of a stifled public no longer able to voice its views with the freedom of expression it once enjoyed, but now permitted only to flatter the current rulers, at least in public. But was freedom of expression ever as inviolable as it is sometimes made out to be? As evidenced by the fate of Socrates, tyrannies and military dictatorships were not the only forms of political rule where words and opposing concepts could, in fact, hurt people. Naturally, despotic rule often created conditions where orators and others who entered the realm of political discourse might need to choose their words carefully to avoid the possibility of giving offence in a manner that could be life-threatening. Yet, on occasion, a Roman emperor receives credit for choosing tolerance, highlighting both that this was unusual and that individuals could sometimes survive criticism of a ruler.[23] No doubt more often, fulsome praise might be beneficial in disarming in advance the reaction of a despot to any political message, should an orator wish to address some aspect of a ruler's programme. For that reason, it is important that scholars focus no less on political content than on praise and flattery in panegyrics. After all, scholars do not clutter their studies of panegyric in reverse and invective with remarks about the personality traits of orators who delivered these, but focus on technique and content.[24] Concentration on content allows modern readers to glean much useful information from panegyric. For example, orators at times praise specific features of an emperor's policies in a manner that can reveal a ruler's political ideology. These remarks are naturally more reliable when a speaker reminds an emperor and the audience of past actions and behaviour as background to his objective, simply because an orator needed to anticipate an audience's ability to evaluate the truth of his remarks. The same principle applies to statements on an emperor's character or concern for his subjects: pure and baseless flattery would be immediately obvious.[25] In general, the content of epideictic oratory, as is equally true of other sources, needs a validation that can only come from a thorough examination of all the evidence. In that way, panegyrics can offer significant opportunities to understand the attitudes, values and political ideology of emperors.

Some years ago, at an earlier meeting of the Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, two talks in particular addressed the topic of panegyric. One of these, by Dimiter Angelov, suggested that panegyric might be seen as advice literature in which an orator encouraged a ruler to adopt a particular course of action.[26] This, we might argue, mutated a performance of what was ostensibly an epideictic speech into hortatory oratory, where a ruler was urged to adopt a specified point of view on some issue of interest to the orator and his sponsors.[27] In support of his argument, Angelov drew on examples from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A paper by Ruth Webb, published in the same volume but using examples from the sixth century, argues that panegyrics might be employed to change the perspective of the audience rather than that of the ruler.[28] The audience, in other words, was invited to consider a point of view and to adopt it after some deliberation. When that process was in use, the speech, in at least part of its purpose, was more akin to deliberative oratory than to its apparent function as panegyric. The combined argument of these two papers is that epideictic oratory could serve, if not always, at least at times as a replacement for the political discourse more familiar at other places and in other times. Both the rulers and the ruled could address each other, through surrogates at times, in an attempt to promote their political perspectives.

What remains a little unclear is whether the form of panegyric was used because orators felt it necessary to disguise political content or perhaps simply to attract the attention of the target, whether that be the ruler or the ruled. Or it may be that panegyric was employed simply because it had become the standard form of address for the encounters of ruler with ruled in the political environment and perhaps in other environments as well. On the latter point, even embassies and requests for favours might include elements typically heard in panegyric; Libanius' speech on behalf of his friend Aristophanes, to take one example, praises the interest of the emperor Julian (361–363) in individuals and families even while undertaking the burden of empire with words that are reminiscent of remarks about a ruler's penchant for dispensing virtuous justice regularly found in panegyrics.[29] Naturally, Menander Rhetor's prescription for imperial panegyric includes a treatment of a ruler's virtues. But that hardly compels the view that praise of virtues should be limited to panegyrics. And therein lies one of the difficulties inherent in the attempt to categorize oratory: it is a messy undertaking, precisely because most speeches, certainly by the late Roman and Byzantine periods, are not pure examples of any genre of oratory as these were refined and defined at Athens in the fourth century BC – or, for that matter, re-refined and re-defined in subsequent centuries.[30] Not every speech that includes elements of praise is a panegyric and not every speech defined as a panegyric is filled with praise and nothing more.

Would it perhaps be better to understand the panegyric not as a form of speech but as an occasion at which a speech or several speeches were delivered? That would be a return, of course, to the origin of the word, since it derives from the Greek *panegyris*, the term used to describe a festival, often with some religious connections, where oratory was featured in some way. As noted above, Menander Rhetor calls the type of speech that is now usually called panegyric the *basilikos*

logos, that is, the 'imperial speech';[31] he does not call such speeches panegyrics. Now it may well be true in the late Roman period that festivals of many types regularly included an imperial oration, more so when the emperor was present, but not all festivals required an imperial oration. The best surviving example of a non-imperial festival speech is an oration of Aelius Aristeides (AD 117–181), *In Praise of Athens*, delivered at the Panathenaia (perhaps in AD 155[32]). It is an encomium of Athens, a speech highly appropriate to the occasion of its delivery. Orators were expected to praise the subject or topic of the festival, and this developed into the habit of delivering encomia at the public appearances of emperors, which had over time become solemn events with religious implications, especially after Diocletian's reforms transformed emperors into mortal deities, as it were. The public appearances of emperors became festivals, occasions for ceremonial that demanded the same response as other religious festivals.[33] This process, and the fact that most surviving political oratory from the late Roman and Byzantine periods falls into the genre of encomium, has led to the equation, even in the definition, of speech with occasion.

Most of this has, of course, been stated before; meanwhile, it has become impossible to reverse the process, that is, to prevent orations, particularly panegyric, from being defined as the equivalent of their occasions. The same process does not seem to have occurred elsewhere. Invective, to take the opposite form of epideictic oratory, is not identified by some term or other derived from the occasion of its usual performance; at best, it is sometimes linked to the Saturnalia in some way, but adjectivally, not as a noun. Similarly, orations delivered at funerals are called 'funerary speeches' or 'funeral orations': the Greek term *epitaphios* is adjectival rather than nominal. The Greek *panegyrikos* is also an adjective, meant to designate any speech delivered at a festival, not, as in English usage, a noun to describe speeches of praise.

As noted, the equation of occasion with type of speech in the very definition is not going to change; better, therefore, to focus the remainder of this chapter on something else. Both Angelov and Webb, and others besides, have pointed to the political dimension of imperial oratory, of panegyric, so to speak. That point can be made more forcefully. Behind the ceremonial of imperial appearances and all that this entailed, the festivals were essentially political events. These were the occasions when ruler and ruled encountered each other politically, the occasions when politics came out of the back rooms into public view, the occasions when ruler and ruled were able to influence each other politically in a public discussion that was far more congenial than the cheers and jeers of claques in the hippodromes and other public venues that sometimes led to mass execution.[34] The festivals, in other words, became the acceptable venue for the expression of political perspective, where the potential sting of disagreement and criticism was moderated by the praise suitable to the occasion. Public response to imperial policy or requests to emperors to consider different policies and any realization that its views did not coincide with those of the emperor might provoke less immediate discontent, for both the public and the emperor, because of the festive environment.

The view that these festivals were essentially political occasions permits more discussion of the political goals of orators and less dismay at the apparent emptiness of the flattery. That technique was a requirement of the occasion, be it the Panathenaia or the *adventus* of an emperor, and the reaction of later generations to its presence is irrelevant to an understanding of its purpose. More important than its presence is the manner in which it was employed. Did an orator spout empty praise in an effort to secure some benefit for himself or was his praise designed to ensure a hearing or a more favourable hearing for a political point of view? Was it even acceptable for an orator to pursue personal gain at a public festival? Was flattery employed by what we would call a publicity agent to remind an audience of the moral quality of its ruler as a technique to prepare its ears and minds for the delineation of imperial policy, in the hope that this would be received more favourably because it had been made by an upstanding emperor? Flattery, in this view, is nothing more, nothing less, than a substrate, an avenue along which political content might delightfully wend its way to the ears of the intended audience, be it the public or the emperor.

On this basis, we may consider some specific examples of political content in panegyric. Angelov and Webb have done this, too, for their centuries of focus, but the process began earlier than the sixth century. The discussion here treats a few items that have long been familiar to me, but with a slight shift in the interpretation stemming from a more complete understanding that opportunities for panegyric were political occasions. One of the leading non-imperial figures of the fourth century was Themistius (*c.* 317–*c.* 388), who interacted with the imperial court from the latter part of the 340s to the mid-380s.[35] Trained in rhetoric and in philosophy (which he also taught), he delivered his first speech to Constantius II (337–361) at Ancyra, most likely in March 347. In 355 he was named to the senate of Constantinople and was soon (357) charged with the responsibility of finding new senators when Constantius chose to expand the senate; under Theodosius I (379–395), he served as prefect of the city. Throughout his life, he offered panegyrics of emperors and, as the ambassador of Constantinople and of the eastern senate, he was generally able to work well with his emperors. It has long been my view that Themistius employed his speeches to emperors as vehicles to promote and to ensure the continuation of what he approved in imperial policy and to effect changes where he disagreed, usually as a representative of a larger group in Constantinople.[36] In one sense, he is unique; he is characterized in a summary attached to his *Oration* 4 as a *politikos philosophos*, a philosopher involved in imperial politics. This caused difficulties with contemporaries that have influenced scholarship as well. A philosopher, by virtue of his profession, was expected to speak only the truth,[37] which, in any case, only he could truly see, a point that Themistius makes on a couple of occasions.[38] Active participation in politics, however, was by the fourth century regarded as activity that sullied the purity of philosophy. And when that participation included flattery, some of Themistius' contemporaries accused him of being a false philosopher, because he did not, in their view, speak the truth at all times. His involvement in politics

was not the problem, but rather his claim that he could do this while continuing to be a philosopher.[39] Though views have changed somewhat, some scholars have raised the same issues and castigated him for spouting unmitigated flattery as a venal agent of the emperors he served.[40] When, however, flattery is regarded as the substrate of imperial speeches, it becomes clearer that Themistius was merely following protocol, just like any other orator delivering a speech on a similar occasion. Since the same substrate appears in all imperial speeches, this common denominator may be put aside as an integral element in terms of understanding the goal of a speech; naturally, its use as a technique can be studied with profit, and its topics can reveal what emperors, collectively or individually, liked to hear about themselves. But with the substrate out of the way, the true mission of any speech can become more evident.

Themistius ended *Oration* 9 to Valens (364–378) by asking the emperor to install his infant son Valentinianus Galates, who had become consul on 1 January 368, in the imperial college. That might seem an odd request in a panegyric, but it derives from a perspective evident in the orator's speeches from the reign of Constantius II onwards. Not much earlier in the West, the emperor Valentinian I (364–375) had raised his son Gratian to the rank of first Caesar, then Augustus. Since Valens was sole ruler in the East, the promotion of Gratian had created an imbalance in the structure of the imperial college. Themistius, who regularly promotes the view that the East and its Constantinople ought to be equal to the West and its Rome in every way,[41] urges Valens to address the imbalance by adding his son to the imperial college. This, we may argue, is hortatory rhetoric, not dissimilar to the oratory that regularly appears in the political life of fifth-century Athens and Republican Rome. Though it has other uses, this type of oratory can be highly political, and Themistius made the request for political reasons almost certainly shared with many others at Constantinople, and as their delegated representative. For what it is worth, Valentinianus Galates never became Caesar or Augustus, since he soon died. But the failure to succeed is irrelevant to the initial political goal of Themistius and his sponsors. Even if, from a different point of view on the speech, Themistius was actively encouraged to float a concept for public discussion and consideration on behalf of Valens, that concept was nevertheless wholly in harmony with a perspective that he regularly espoused.[42]

On another occasion, Themistius suggests to Theodosius that a peace made with the Goths in 382 would reap benefits for the empire. In the previous years, Rome and the Goths had endured a tenuous relationship. After a series of campaigns in 367–369, Valens had achieved peace, more accurately a stalemate, with the Goths and signed a treaty with them. Some years later in 376, one group of Goths, under pressure from marauding Huns, was granted permission to cross the Danube and live in Roman territory. Mistreatment by Roman officials triggered a revolt that led to the battle of Hadrianople in 378, where Roman forces were decimated and Valens lost his life. Subsequently, first as general, then as emperor, Theodosius stabilized the area and signed a treaty, perhaps little more than a ceasefire, which legitimated Gothic habitation south of the Danube.[43]

Even if one were to assume that the empire could have destroyed the Goths with impunity, Themistius writes, 'Would it be better to fill Thrace with bodies or farmers? To point out that it is filled with graves or men? To number the slain or ploughmen? To resettle the Phrygians and Bithynians, if it comes down to that, or to cohabit with those whom we have subdued? I hear from those who have come from there that they have now made the iron of the swords and armour into mattocks and sickles . . .' (*Or*. 16.211a–b). The background here is that peace with the Goths was not popular everywhere. Some imperial advisors counselled Valens and Theodosius simply to slaughter the Goths or at least drive them once again beyond the Danube.[44] In contrast, Themistius is thinking of expenditure of both men and financial resources and of the benefit of returning land to production and thus to taxation. It is obvious enough what his personal perspective is, but rather than exhort Theodosius to adopt his point of view he ostensibly asks the emperor to think carefully about the issue, to deliberate it. What we have here in form, for this portion of *Oration* 16, is deliberative oratory, a speech that asks an audience to deliberate the issues involved before making up its mind. It does not really matter whether Themistius' audience is Theodosius with perhaps a few of the emperor's advisers or the crowd at the festival at which the speech was delivered. Since the peace preceded the speech, Theodosius had in any case made up his mind, but even then it may have been important for Themistius to make an effort to ensure that the emperor did not change it. Moreover, the inhabitants of Constantinople may well have needed a full dose of reassurance that this policy was correct, for Goths had threatened the very gates of their city only a few years earlier.[45] Was Themistius a mouthpiece for Theodosius, a public relations officer explaining away the failure of the emperor to destroy the Goths and the inevitable need to change imperial policy in favour of peace (with honour?) rather than continued warfare?[46] Not likely, for he had expressed similar views on the benefits of peace in the reign of Valens.[47] In fact, Themistius claims that he came out of retirement because the achievement of peace was an opportunity that he could not ignore.[48] His views were his own, shared with a significant number of senators at Constantinople, and it is unfair to argue that the vocalization of views shared by panegyrist and emperor represents pure flattery. In any case, since Theodosius had attempted war and Themistius had long promoted peace, it was the emperor's position, not the philosopher's, that changed, though we cannot know whether Theodosius was more influenced by Themistius than by circumstances.[49] By asking his audience to consider alternatives, Themistius is asking it to deliberate and to decide on the best policy on the issue (or at least to view the new direction as acceptable). Such deliberation was no longer the prelude to a vote, but it might lead to greater public support for the view that peace on acceptable terms was better than constant warfare and to greater approval of Theodosius' actions as emperor. Even without votes, that is tantamount to political support and thus the oration, ostensibly a panegyric, is in essence a political speech. As such, it also reveals the need for rulers to ensure that their public understood them and their policies.

Naturally, it would be better for this interpretation of panegyric as political oratory if, from time to time, speeches or parts of them opposed imperial policy or at least attempted to lure an emperor into a policy direction that he was not initially inclined to pursue. Both exhortation and a call to deliberation might be employed by an orator with that type of goal. If panegyric allowed the possibility of assisting an emperor in the formation of his policy, it becomes more feasible to suggest that at least a modicum of independent political expression was available to an emperor's subjects. Angelov outlines several examples where orators engaged in argument, offered opinions and issued warnings, sometimes to emperors, sometimes to the general audience, sometimes to both.[50] Similarly, any occasion when a panegyrist might threaten the withdrawal of support or outline some other consequence of an emperor's failure to adopt a policy or process expounded by the orator on behalf of his sponsors would naturally indicate that rhetors had more licence than is often accorded to them by scholars. No one should deny, of course, that addresses to military dictators needed to be crafted very carefully to avoid the giving of fatal offence in the first instance but also to the securing of the request or policy direction.

Direct opposition to rulers is thus rarely, if ever, on display in the surviving panegyrics. There are examples where, in modern interpretation at least, orators have been thought to reveal their opposition to imperial policies or to direct veiled threats. The topic was examined by Roger Rees some years ago in a study of selected Latin panegyrics, and he proposed that at times an orator might address a ruler in terms that could alert a ruler to the need to treat his subjects well enough to retain their support.[51] The situation was perhaps unique; at the time of these Latin panegyrics, the populace of Gaul was occasionally courted for political support by men seeking to force their way, by fair means or foul, into the imperial college or attempting to enhance their own status within it. Generally, Gaul was loyal to the imperial college, provided that Constantine I (306–337) is held to be a legitimate ruler when he first rose to power.[52] Not too many years earlier Gaul had been a separate domain under its own emperors, the so-called 'Gallic Empire' (AD 260–274).[53] Men who had observed that episode were still alive and included the emperors Diocletian (284–305) and Maximian (286–305, 307–310), as well as Constantius I (305–306); Galerius (305–311) was younger. Consequently, anxiety about Gallic loyalty was not unreasonable under those circumstances. Indeed, Constantine I's appearance on the continent as a self-proclaimed emperor and his residence at Trier[54] perhaps triggered a recollection of the past that contributed to his support in Gaul and allowed him to undertake his larger ambitions. The interlude of the British usurpers Carausius (286–293) and Allectus (293–296) was also more than a little germane: for about a decade in the 280s and 290s,[55] Britain was lost to the empire.

In that environment, the Gauls, or some military units in the region,[56] might at times choose to prefer one ruler to another. The several panegyrics by Gallic orators that praised and supported the emperors must then have been more welcome than the usual exercises in this genre. The catalogue includes a pair of speeches

to Maximian (X; XI[57]) and one to Constantius (VIII), with a fourth (IX) delivered by an official attached to the court of Constantius pleading for the restoration of the schools, while assuring emperors of Autun's support. A fifth speech (VII), delivered at Trier, celebrates the marriage in 307 of Constantine to Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, and honours both men. In light of the preceding remarks about Constantine and in recognition of the fact that Maximian had but recently reassumed power, it seems that the orator was bold enough, or perhaps merely cautious enough, to prefer western rulers of dubious legitimacy[58] to a Tetrarchic system. If so, this loyalty differs from that of previous panegyrics, where an occasional subtle remark might remind an emperor of the need to satisfy his subjects' expectations. For example, it is clear enough in *Pan. Lat.* X that the orator spoke in full support of Maximian – somewhat at the expense of Diocletian, though the latter is not vilified in any way.[59] In the larger context, this oration was delivered against the backdrop of Carausius, who had kept a foothold on the continent at Boulogne.[60] The *Panegyric* of 297 may help us to understand some of the attendant circumstances, for its orator mentions that some Gallic merchants had joined Carausius.[61] Even if they had engaged in this treasonous activity simply to retain their access to British markets, their choice was one that others could make; for that reason, Maximian and other legitimate emperors were advised and warned to ensure that they ruled in a manner conducive to retaining the support they currently enjoyed.

In the modern world, potential supporters might ask candidates to outline their positions and make their bids for popular acclaim at all-candidates' meetings. These did not occur in the fourth century AD; if they had, some candidates would surely have vacated the sites in body bags. It was left to selected representatives of the population, the most accomplished orators, to employ techniques of the primary form of political discourse available to ascertain or direct the interest of a ruler or potential ruler. A veiled threat to deny or withdraw support, or even simply a reminder that support was not universal, was naturally more effective when rivals existed; it was perhaps also safer in such circumstances, because punishment of offenders might result in an immediate defection of communities to rivals. Since that situation applied infrequently, we rarely hear threats, veiled or open, in panegyrics, but they do exist. It seems, therefore, that it was sometimes possible for orators to disagree and to threaten; though this needed to be done with great care, the ability to express independent political thought had apparently not completely disappeared in the late Roman imperial period.

I turn to one final example of unhappiness with imperial policy. As Caesar, Julian composed two panegyrics, perhaps never delivered orally, of his cousin, the emperor Constantius II. The second in particular has been seen as, at points, critical of Constantius; that is not surprising, for scholars have been heavily influenced by Julian's propaganda as a usurper against his cousin to seek earlier expressions of his later attitude.[62] At least one example of discontent may be found already in his first panegyric.[63] As is typical, Julian praises Constantius for his skills in shooting and riding and points out that Constantine I had done

the right thing by allowing his son to receive this training as a youth practising alongside the military in actual campaigns.[64] He continues: 'It is not suitable for someone being educated to guide an empire like ours to be given the training in some humble out-of-the-way place' (*Or.* 1.13a). I take this as evidence that Julian had in fact taken some training in shooting and riding during the so-called exile at Macellum (the 'humble out-of-the-way place', or as the Loeb translation has it 'some modest dwelling apart') and that Julian was therefore quite disingenuous when claiming that he had been brought to the throne with no training at all.[65] That interpretation will stand or fall on its own merits, but in the present context a further suggestion may be added. Especially in the deliberate contrast to Constantius' own training, Julian is pointing out that his own training for military leadership had been woefully inadequate. In a panegyric, these remarks can only be criticism; it is not praise. The criticism may be personal, but it also speaks to a difference of opinion on the proper training for potential rulers, and in that latter sense the remarks are political.

In summary, I have tried to show that political discourse and independent political thought continued to be possible in the imperial period and were not completely stifled by the military dictatorship that imperial rule represents. As in the assemblies and other political environments of what we might call more democratic times, orators and other speakers attempted to persuade individuals and groups to adopt or accept a political view. That applies equally to orators speaking on behalf of emperors to the public and on behalf of the public to emperors. All of this was done in a most congenial way at festivals as the context in which political perspectives, in terms of the public interaction of rulers and their ruled, were exchanged in the speeches that attended the occasions. The festival atmosphere could at least temporarily mask any disappointment or displeasure that might be less hidden on other occasions. From that point of view, flattery in panegyrics was a necessary device and may therefore be seen as a positive element of political exchange, not a negative one. This recognition allows panegyrics to be studied on their own terms and thus more effectively, as scholars concentrate on finer details of content to determine more precisely who was saying what to whom and what techniques the orators employed to ensure favourable hearings from their audiences. To turn an expression a bit on its side, in the public political life of the late Roman world, flattery was the only thing that could get you anywhere.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Shaun Tougher for inviting me to participate in the Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies at Cardiff in April 2014. Much of the argument is based on primary evidence, but some deliberately selective and brief annotation has been added, along with alteration to suit written rather than oral treatment.
2 As is evident at multiple points in Whitby 1998.
3 Though the situation must surely have been different in smaller towns, see Maxwell 2006: ch. 2, for discussion of opportunities to listen to rhetoric at Antioch.

4 See Kelly 1995: 56, on John Chrysostom's first sermon at Antioch: 'We may be sure that Flavian did not feel in the least embarrassed by the exaggerated compliments, and that the huge audience savoured with relish the carefully arranged periods and contrived repetitions, the recherché vocabulary and the skilful use of commonplaces (*topoi*) dear to practised orators.'

5 See the brief remarks of Drake 2012: 35.

6 Numerous troupes of entertainers criss-crossed the provinces of the empire; presumably, they appeared in small towns in something of a regular cycle, rather like the fairs and circuses of more modern times. Evidence is limited, but fragments of more than one green glass cup bearing the images and names of the same gladiators, in Colchester and Leicester, suggest that some troupes carried a stock of souvenirs to sell; see Allason-Jones 2011: 221–226, who is more cautious on the possibility that these were sold at performances. At times, travelling entertainment could serve a political purpose. An example is the spectacles provided by Titus as he worked his way around the East with his multitude of captives before returning to Rome from Judaea (Jos., *Bell. Iud.* 7.96). Similarly, heads of usurpers might be affixed to pikes as they were transported along the roads of the empire; here, the political message superceded any entertainment value – proof of death to residual supporters, like the inhabitants of Philippolis, who continued to support Procopius until they saw his head pass by on its way to Gaul and the court of the senior emperor Valentinian I (Amm. Marc. 26.10.6; 27.2.10); see Lenski 2002: 81–82. As for visual entertainment, Ando 2000: 257, mentions the possibility that painted images of battles accompanied victory bulletins that emperors regularly sent to the provinces as well as to Rome and Constantinople. On paintings paraded in Roman triumphs, see Ando 2000: 253–259, and Lusnia 2006: esp. 284ff.

7 *Ep*. 1543. On Amphilochius, see Maxwell 2006: 36–39, who quotes a portion of the letter.

8 John Chrysostom regularly upbraided his audiences for enjoying rhetoric more than religion; in the words of Kelly 1995: 57, 'he often inveighed bitterly against the crowds which flocked to church exclusively to listen to the preacher, only to rush off before the awesome climax when Christ would reveal himself in the holy mysteries'.

9 Perhaps even then, 'the medium [was] the message', as Marshall McLuhan (1964: 7) proclaimed.

10 For crowds at Antioch, see Kelly 1995: 57 (quoted in n. 4 above); even pagans attended his sermons: Kelly 1995: 82. At Constantinople, Chrysostom very quickly built up a following that supported him and even blocked attempts to arrest him when he was sentenced to banishment; see, in general, Kelly 1995: 115–116, 229 and *passim*.

11 Kelly 1995: 211–271, offers an account; see also Holum 1982: 48–78.

12 Well-expressed by Heather and Moncur 2001: 25: 'truth-tellers in autocracies do not have a great life expectancy'. Ammianus Marcellinus (26.1.1) speaks of the 'dangers often lying adjacent [*contigua*] to the truth'.

13 Thus, for example, Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*. Later orators continued to deliver such speeches. Examples include Dio Chrysostom's *In Praise of Hair, In Praise of the Gnat* and *In Praise of a Parrot*; the last two are not extant, but the first is quoted in Synesius' *In Praise of Baldness*. For some remarks about such works from Gorgias to Libanius, see Russell 1998: 22–23.

14 Xenophon's *Agesilaos* and Isocrates' *Evagoras* are generally regarded as the earliest extant treatments to apply the techniques of epideictic rhetoric to contemporaries rather than mythical figures. For brief discussion, see Russell and Wilson 1981: xiii–xv.

15 Known as either 'The King's Peace' or 'The Peace of Antalcidas'.

16 It may be that the two treatises of outlines for various speeches were compiled by different writers, most likely in the third century. For discussion of these points, as well as the texts and translations, see Russell and Wilson 1981.

17 Perhaps the best extant examples on a model ruler are the speeches of Dio Chrysostom to Trajan. See Jones 1978: 115–123.
18 The late Roman period provides better, sometimes the only specific, evidence and examples; the remarks in the text nevertheless apply to all periods. The Egyptian poet Claudius Claudianus travelled to Rome and found a patron in Stilicho, the father-in-law of Honorius (395–423) and the power behind the throne. Among his poems are a number of paneyrics in epic verse of both his patron Stilicho and the emperor Honorius, most, if not all, recited publicly. On Claudian, see Cameron 1970.
19 Assurance of loyalty may be an objective of Latinus Pacatus Drepanius' panegyric of Theodosius I in 389; he represented one or more Gallic communities that had fallen under the control of the usurper Magnus Maximus (r. 384–388), and he needed both to excuse that circumstance and to offer loyalty to Theodosius. See Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 437–447, for discussion.
20 The best examples come from the Roman imperial world, where Pliny the Younger and Claudius Mamertinus thanked Trajan in 100 and Julian in 362 respectively for the consulships given to them.
21 See Vanderspoel 2006: 127, for brief remarks, in the context of the proliferation of schools of rhetoric in the Hellenistic world, about the utility of rhetoric in the context of the relationship between ruler and ruled. On the development of rhetoric in the Hellenistic world more generally, see Pernot 2005: 57–82. More broadly, see Kennedy 1994, which encapsulates his several previous works, and Porter 2001, a wide-ranging collection of essays on numerous topics. On utility of training in rhetoric of various types in the later Roman period, see Heath 2004, especially his final chapter on 'The relevance of rhetoric' (277–331).
22 Of the panegyrics in the Latin collection, the names of only five, including Pliny and Claudius Mamertinus (see n. 20 above), are known. The other seven remain anonymous, though most were presumably orators and/or prominent citizens. For what is known, see the introductions to the individual speeches in Nixon and Rodgers 1994. Rees 2002 treats four of these panegyrics in great detail and outlines what is known about their authors.
23 See, for example, Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51, 55–56.
24 Humphries 1998 calls Hilary of Poitiers' *Against Constantius* an anti-panegyric. On this and similar contemporary works, see now Flower 2013, who calls them invective; his discussion regularly addresses the use of the techniques of panegyric. For a full study of a specific invective, see Long 1996.
25 Inevitably, rivals and political enemies might accuse an orator of employing flattery for personal gain – whether or not a speech was pure flattery and/or whether or not any gain accrued. See Vanderspoel 1995: 108–110, 208–210, and *passim*, for Themistius' experiences in this regard.
26 Angelov 2003.
27 See also the chapter in this volume by Nikolaos Chrissis, examining the orations of Niketas Choniates for Theodore I Laskaris and suggesting that he was 'offering advice and suggesting a political programme'.
28 Webb 2003.
29 Libanius, *Or*. 14.25, speaks of requesting assistance for Aristophanes in the knowledge that Julian was interested in every family and individual. Menander, *Treatise* II.375 (Russell and Wilson 1981: 89), suggests that under the head of justice an orator should mention mildness toward subjects, humanity in regard to petitioners and an emperor's accessibility.
30 Very briefly, Vanderspoel 2006: 125–127, citing earlier work on several aspects of the topic in the notes to those pages.
31 *Treatise* II.368 (= Russell and Wilson 1981: 76).

32 Behr 1968: 87–88.
33 MacCormack 1981 remains the classic treatment, though much work has been done on numerous details subsequently.
34 The Nika Riot at Constantinople in AD 532 is the best-known example, and, naturally, every book on Justinian I and on Theodora discusses it. See also Greatrex 1997, who notes that the event was hardly unique and places it in the context of similar occurences.
35 See Vanderspoel 1995 for a more detailed treatment of his life and work.
36 Essentially, that is the central interpretation of Vanderspoel 1995; see 4–5 and 217–221, for the most succinct statements of the point.
37 For testimony on this point from someone other than Themistius, see Julian, *Ep. ad Them*. 254b: 'I thought that it was unlawful for you to flatter or deceive', responding to Themistius' favourable remarks and encouragement of the young Caesar. On *parrhésia*, the licence to speak the truth that philosophers possessed, see Brown 1992: 61–70.
38 For example, at *Or*. 3.44b–46c and *Or*. 7.84b–86b.
39 These themes appear regularly in Vanderspoel 1995: *passim*. A thorough consideration of these topics that reaches different conclusions may be found in Heather and Moncur 2001: 12–42. In brief, Heather and Moncur tend to regard flattery as a technique employed by Themistius to promote an emperor's existing or planned programme and in the interest of personal advancement, not as a device to attract imperial attention to proposals and suggestions for an emperor's consideration.
40 See Vanderspoel 1995: 1–5, for a brief survey.
41 See Vanderspoel 2012a for a recent reconsideration of Themistius' views about the relative statuses of Rome and Constantinople.
42 It is perhaps worth noting here that Themistius appears on occasion to promote different views on issues at different times. That does not transform him into a venal flatterer, unless every political figure who has ever changed his or her mind in the course of a 40-year career is also regarded as venal. Individuals, even politicians, do change their minds sometimes, often for very good reasons. We cannot always know why Themistius chose a different view than that he had expressed earlier, and, at any rate, there are also issues where Themistius' views are consistent; the status of Constantinople is one of those issues.
43 See Heather 1991: 115–192, for a far more detailed treatment of the period summarized here.
44 Dagron 1968: 95–112, treats this in some depth, pointing out that Themistius and others were opposed to the military policy of Valens; see, briefly, Vanderspoel 1995: 175–176.
45 In that context, the city's population had enraged Valens, when he passed through on his journey to his demise at Hadrianople, by implying that the emperor had not provided adequately for the city's security against the Goths: they offered to take care of the task themselves, if only the emperor would provide them with weapons. According to Socrates, *HE* 4.38.5, Valens responded by threatening to overturn the city and plough the site upon his return from battle. Some assurance of their safety may well have been needed before its inhabitants could feel secure about any arrangement with Goths.
46 That is a typical interpretation of the speech; see, among others, Heather 1991: 158–175. For a different view, Vanderspoel 1995: 205–208, with reference to other treatments.
47 See Vanderspoel 1995: 173–176, for a brief treatment.
48 *Or*. 16.199c–d. If Themistius had indeed retired from public life or from public speaking, Theodosius presumably called upon a well-known proponent of peace to persuade

the city's inhabitants of the benefits of the peace he had just concluded. Themistius was known to Theodosius for a pair of earlier speeches, and he did subsequently deliver a few more speeches and serve as prefect of Constantinople in the mid 380s before disappearing from view in the latter years of the decade.

49 Themistius does claim to have changed Valens' mind once or twice: *Or*. 31.354d. In *Or*. 34.13, he also takes credit for bringing back several honours for Constantinople secured during his sojourn at Rome during Constantius' visit there in 357. See Vanderspoel 1995: 104–106.

50 Angelov 2003: 65–70.

51 Rees 2002.

52 The legitimacy of Constantine was an open question, as Diocletian sought unsuccessfully to accommodate his self-aggrandizement with offers of a status lower than his claim that he had succeeded his father as Augustus at York in 306.

53 For a thorough survey, see Drinkwater 1987.

54 There is no consensus on where the Gallic emperors maintained their primary residence, but Trier and Cologne are the likely candidates. Maximian certainly resided at Trier while in northern Gaul; the city was thus an established imperial residence when Constantine arrived, even if Postumus (259–268) and his successors had not made it their imperial home.

55 See Casey 1994: 39–45, for a detailed treatment of the dates.

56 See Amm. Marc. 30.10. When Valentinian died suddenly at Bregetio, officials soon named his four-year-old son Valentinian Augustus without prior approval of Valens or Gratian. One consideration was that military units in Gaul did not always support legitimate emperors and regarded themselves as the arbiters of legitimate rule (*ut imperiorum arbitri*) – who might desert Gratian, then at Trier. A new familial Augustus could generate a little caution in Gaul. Also, Merobaudes and Sebastianus, previously sent into Alamannic territory, were repositioned. Merobaudes acted as if he was required to return with the messenger, suspecting that his Gallic troops might misbehave, while Sebastianus was posted somewhat farther away, since he was held in high regard by the troops and was thus a threat. The *Historia Augusta, Firmus, Saturninus, Proculus et Bonosus*, 7.1, states that Saturninus was a Gaul, 'from a very restless nation of men always zealous either to make an emperor or an empire'. The fact that Zosimus 1.61.1 calls him a Moor, probably correctly, is irrelevant to the sentiment here outlined.

57 I use here the numeration that reflects the sequence of orations in the manuscripts without the traditional use of a secondary numerations, which differ at some points.

58 This legitimacy, dubious or otherwise, may not apply to Maximian's son Maxentius, whose role in the return of his father is buried in studied vagueness. It may therefore be the case that the orator preferred Constantine, but includes Maximian to boost Constantine's legitimacy, through his daughter and through the claim that he, a former Augustus, gave the title to Constantine, who had been content with the title Caesar (a false claim, though he did allow the East to think that it was true). That is why Maximian needed to be re-legitimized in the speech, by questioning his forced retirement and by the plaintive cries of Roma herself for his return.

59 Rees 2002: 27–67.

60 Casey 1994: 89–105.

61 Casey 1994: 53. The orator refers to a 'levy' (*Pan. Lat.* VIII[5] 12.1: *dilectum*) of Gallic merchants, who along with others, became part of Carausius' naval forces. As Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 129, n. 43, point out, there is no reason to assume that the merchants were forced to join the usurpation, especially in the recent context of the Gallic Empire.

62 See Drake 2012: 38, for convenient reference.

63 See Tougher 2012 for the view that this oration, too, is worthy of more detailed examination than it was previously accorded.

64 On the military role of emperors see Chapter 9 by Trombley and Tougher in this volume.

65 Vanderspoel 2012b: 325–326. The coinciding argument is that scholars have been partially wrong to follow Julian's own complaint that the stay at Macellum was an exile. He was indeed removed from his home at Constantinople, but he was secure (and perhaps conveniently out of the public eye) and could be brought up with some attention to his role as a prince of the dynasty at Macellum.

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11

THE ICONOCLAST SAINT

Emperor Theophilos in Byzantine hagiography

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While the process of canonisation of Byzantine empresses of the iconoclast and post-iconoclast periods (Irene, Theodora, Theophano, etc.) has been studied in detail, this is not the case for their male counterparts, whose treatment in hagiographic literature has received much less attention.[1] In order to fill this gap, this chapter focuses on the last iconoclast ruler and analyses the development of the emperor Theophilos (829–842) as a literary character, which evolved from hatred to love under the pen of the iconodule hagiographers. Social changes in response to the political needs of the rulers brought about his transformation into a saint only at a literary level, not at a liturgical one, since it did not result from religious questions or from his own thaumaturgical power, but from affairs of state and political reasons. In fact, as a key factor in maintaining the dynasty, Theophilos' absolution, rehabilitation and canonisation were subsequently established by means of a propagandistic programme, the causes of which will also be scrutinised.

Introduction: The iconophile restoration of the iconoclast leaders

The traditional role of the iconoclast emperors in Byzantine hagiography is usually limited to their characteristic function as antagonists of the saint. They thus become representatives of the Devil, enemies of God and precursors of the Antichrist, heretics and villains *par excellence*. The examples of Constantine V Copronymus (741–775) or Leo V the Armenian (813–820) who interrogate and punish, imprison or exile the iconodules for their piety, are well known and have already been examined.[2] The figure of the emperor Theophilos inherited this hagiographic model and was also denounced for having persecuted the defenders of images.[3] According to numerous sources, in the fourth year of his reign (832–833) he decided to take up a coercive policy again, persecuting them and obliging them to disperse and go into exile.[4] The hagiographies of the saints of this period reflect the repercussions of this iconoclast decree and paint Theophilos in a negative

light, as can be seen in the *vitae* of Peter of Atroa, the patrician Niketas, the patriarch Ignatios, the patriarch Methodios, and Hilarion of Dalmatos.[5] As a consequence of this measure, the principal iconodule leaders were exiled to the isle of Aphousia, in the Propontis, as recorded in both the hagiographies and the short notices in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*.[6] They also reflect the suffering inflicted upon the iconodules, such as the cruel torture of the painter Lazarus, whose hands were burnt,[7] or the brutal punishment meted out to the Graptoi brothers, who had humiliating verses tattooed on their faces.[8]

However, this is by no means the only image we have of the iconoclast emperors. Theophilos evolved to become the protagonist of hagiographic stories, as if he were an iconodule. This phenomenon, which may seem surprising and inexplicable, must be understood within its socio-political context. It shows how some of the main iconoclast leaders began to be worshipped in the new iconodule regime established after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. There are the cases of the *magistros* Manuel the Armenian and of the *kanikleios* Theoktistos, according to the liturgy in the *synaxaria*. Manuel prospered at the orders of the iconoclast emperors Leo V, who named him *patrikios* and *strategos* of the *thema* of the Armeniakoi, and Theophilos, who named him *magistros* and *domestikos ton scholon*, getting him to march by his side. In the campaign of 837 they took Zapetra, and on 22 July 838, at the Battle of Anzes (on the Dazimon plains)[9] Manuel heroically saved Theophilos' life, becoming gravely injured and dying five days later,[10] on 27 July 838.[11] Manuel was buried in his palace in the capital, near the cistern of Aspar, where devotion to him plausibly took hold among monks of Manuel's monastery.[12] Finally his sanctification was recognised with his entry in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*.[13]

A similar case was that of Theoktistos, a eunuch who had a brilliant career under the iconoclast emperors: after forming part of the imperial guard of Leo V, he helped Michael II (820–829) to attain the throne.[14] Michael named him *patrikios* and *chartoularios tou kanikleiou*. For his part, Theophilos named him *magistros* and *logothetes tou dromou* before designating him as counsel to Theodora during the regency for Michael III (842–867). Theoktistos' loyalty to Theodora cost him his life in 855 when Bardas and the young Michael wished to relegate the empress far away from power. To his military effort – the Cretan campaign of 843, which was not particularly brilliant – must be added his decisive influence in ecclesiastical matters, such as the designations of Methodios and Ignatios to the patriarchate in 843 and 847 respectively. According to the Logothete, thanks to the suggestion and counsel of Theoktistos, Theodora recovered the devotion to icons.[15] What is more, it was he who hosted a synod in the palace of the *kanikleios* in preparation for the restoration of devotion to icons.[16] Based on this and on the proactive role he had in the conversion of Theophilos through his *enkolpion*, Theoktistos began to receive devotion after his death and he was entered into the liturgical calendar and his memory was celebrated on 20 November.[17] Although the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* is rather terse,[18] the calendar of saints' days collected in the manuscript *Parisinus gr.* 1582 adds that he was a martyr, whereas Nikodemos the

Hagiorite and the *Megas synaxaristês* by Doukakis specify that he was a confessor (ὁμολογητής). Most likely his murder at the hands of the ambitious Caesar Bardas made a pious interpretation of the end of his life possible, even though no source indicates that he suffered to defend Orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, Theoktistos' new role as champion of the iconodule cause not only clashed with how extremely familiar he was with the iconoclast emperors, but also with his own past, in which he had actively participated in the persecution of the iconodules. At least that is what it says in the *Vita* of Euthymios of Sardis, which shows how the saint was cruelly interrogated about his collaborators. As a result of his silence, he was whipped by three imperial envoys sent to the small island of St. Andrew, one of them Theoktistos in person, who did not hesitate to prolong his suffering with a total of 130 lashes.[19] The saint died eight days later as a result of the blows received. The hagiographer's condemnation (no other than the future patriarch Methodios) of this was forceful, since he called the tormentors 'mean-spirited' (δείλαιοι), in clear reference to their iconoclast behaviour.[20]

The promotion of these iconoclasts, intimate collaborators of Theophilos, as orthodox saints coincides in time with the sanctification of male members of the empress Theodora's family, such as Sergios Niketiates and his brother Petronas. The *magistros* Sergios Niketiates merited an entry in the *Synaxarion*,[21] even though his principal achievement was to be an outstanding strategist in the Cretan campaign against the Arabs, in which he died on 28 June, during the reign of Michael III.[22] For his part, Petronas was praised as the protector of iconophile saints, which allowed him to enter hagiographic texts despite his past during Second Iconoclasm. Petronas had served as *droungarios tes viglas* under Theophilos, who named him *patrikios*.[23] His behaviour after the restoration of icons was not exemplary, as it was he who helped his brother Bardas defeat Theodora, who was tonsured against her will and confined in the monastery of *Ta Gastria*. In spite of this, Petronas began to be considered a champion of iconodulia and to figure as the protagonist of hagiographic tales, through which he was rehabilitated. Such was the case of the *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii* (*BHG* 494), in which it is told how Petronas called on Saint George of Lesbos to confess all his sins and to hand over as compensation eight pounds of gold, three hundred tunics and three hundred blankets. George interceded so that he would be forgiven his sins and prophesied the future annihilation of the entire Arab army.[24] More obvious is the presence of Petronas in the *Vita* of Antony the Younger (*BHG* 142), a *vita* written by an anonymous hagiographer.[25] In 855 Antony the Younger met Petronas, who sought his blessing in order to overcome a difficult disease. After the miraculous cure of his son Marinos a short time later, such a strong bond was formed between the patrician and the saint that it is asserted that Petronas would have abandoned the secular world and become a monk, if it had not been for the words of Antony the Younger, his confessor from then on, who made him see that he would serve God better by staying in the world.[26] In 863 Antony accompanied his spiritual son Petronas when the latter was going to try to stop the Arab

incursions into Asia Minor. He went with him to the stronghold of Plateia Petra and encouraged him to engage in combat, even if it meant going against the direct orders the emperor had given him, and prophesied an overwhelming victory.[27] That is exactly what happened, the famous battle of Poson which took place on 3 September 863. In appreciation, Petronas installed Antony in his house in Constantinople.[28] When eighty years old and seeing his end approaching, Antony retired to the monastery of Leo the Deacon,[29] where he died at the same time as Petronas, on 11 November 865.[30] The hagiographic text that praises the saint has the peculiarity of presenting a layman like Petronas as a kind of co-protagonist during the last part of the story.[31]

The literary absolution of the last iconoclast emperor

In the midst of this practice, it seems logical that the actual emperor Theophilos would also be a protagonist in this process, by means of which he was the beneficiary of a political-ecclesiastical rehabilitation that pardoned his iconoclast past, and it was not long before it was written up in hagiographical texts. In the success of this enterprise, the role of the context and the other members of the imperial family was determinant. Indeed, shortly after the death of Theophilos his widow Theodora started an arduous campaign to redeem her husband from the accusation of being an iconoclast, to avoid him being anathematised, and thus to guarantee the needed legitimacy for her regency and the future reign of her young son Michael III. Both the historiographical sources (the chronicles of Theophanes Continuatus and Pseudo-Symeon) and the hagiographies (*Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii, Vita Irenes in Chrysobalanto*) are unanimous in considering his wife as the principal agent in the absolution of Theophilos, moved by the great love she had for him.[32] Before proceeding to restore icons, Theodora had asked the religious representatives for the pardon of her husband as a necessary condition for the Triumph of Orthodoxy.[33] Thus, the week of 4–11 March 843 was devoted to imploring for the redemption of Theophilos, according to what had been agreed in the synod held on 3 March in the Kanikleion.[34] When faced with the ecclesiastical difficulties in conceding the absolution, Theodora invoked the repentance of her husband, who, aware of his error, had established in his last will that the ascetics and victims of his persecution should be compensated with sixty pounds of gold. What is more, the deceased emperor supposedly had foresworn iconoclasm on his death-bed, when, after much suffering, he had finally seen the image of Christ that was in the *enkolpion* of Theoktistos, the Logothete of the drome.[35] Theophilos was dying and deliriously thrashing about until he brought the image to his lips, resulting in a sudden cessation of his delirium. The presence of the icon of Christ on the *enkolpion* guaranteed the emperor's conversion. Finally, to dissipate any remaining doubt, the definitive proof that Theophilos received the grace of God could be found in the many miraculous posthumous acts of intercession for his soul: Symeon of Lesbos, one of the principal opponents of his rehabilitation, reached the point of abandoning

the synod for the restoration and the city of Constantinople until he remembered the vision he had had in which Theophilos himself, as soon as he had died, came to him and asked for his help by begging three times: 'Oh, monk, help me!' (Καλόγηρε, βοήθει μοι!).[36]

For her part, according to some of the hagiographies, Theodora had a dream during her husband's last days in which she saw the emperor being tortured by a group of angels in the presence of the Theotokos and Christ. Amidst terrible suffering, Theophilos lamented his punishment and strongly repented having persecuted the images.[37] This vision is narrated both in the *Life* of the empress Theodora and in a hagiographical account on the emperor, *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione* (*BHG* 1734). In this *Tale of Forgiveness of the Emperor Theophilos* the vision dreamed by Theodora shows her husband before the supreme Judge, who is placed in the main entrance to the palace known as Chalke Gate.[38]

As far as the patriarch Methodios is concerned, after having led the prayers for the salvation of Theophilos' soul, he witnessed the appearance of a shining angel, whose mission was to inform him that the emperor had obtained God's forgiveness. This was effectively demonstrated with the miraculous disappearance of his name from the list of iconoclast heretics that the patriarch in person had written and deposited on the high altar of Hagia Sophia in reparation for the damage caused to the icons.[39] Finally, the synod confirmed the redemption of the deceased's soul in writing to the empress. The *Life* of Irene of Chrysobalanton (*BHG* 952) echoes this miracle that certified Theophilos' rehabilitation, although omitting the presence of Methodios, subsumed among the 'holy fathers'.[40] In any case, what becomes clear is the superiority of ecclesiastical over imperial authority, justifying the desire of the rest of his relatives to have the iconoclast emperor redeemed: only with solutions such as the ones that characterised the *oikonomía* of the Byzantine church would it be possible to whitewash his public image and legitimise the dynasty, thus guaranteeing the young heir's right to the throne.

The imperial policy fostered in order to dissociate Theophilos from the iconoclast emperors included a harsh condemnation of the memory of representative figures such as Constantine V, whose remains were desecrated: urged on by Methodios, Theodora ordered his remains burnt in the public square known as Amastriana, just as Constantine had done with the relics and images of the saints. His ashes were thrown into the sea, according to the *Necrologium imperatorum et catalogus eorum sepulchrorum*.[41] At the same time, the hagiographical texts concerning the absolution of Theophilos blossomed, and some have even survived to the present (*BHG* 1732–34k), although their authorship cannot be determined. According to Markopoulos, the rehabilitation of the iconoclast emperor made use of the creation of oral traditions that little by little came to form part of the written discourse and finally crystallised in autonomous works such as *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione*, a narrative that has a rich tradition in manuscripts, and *De Theophili imperatoris benefactis* (*BHG* 1735).[42]

The canonisation of Theophilos: His role in Byzantine hagiography

A comparative analysis of the texts that contain the absolution of Theophilos allow us to obtain a relative chronology: the chronicle by George the Monk, dated to the years 845–846,[43] does not yet mention Theophilos' pardon and his image is still a negative one. Yet we know that after Theophilos' death a series of texts would have been composed to launder his image and that would have addressed the restoration of the icons and the conversion of Theophilos to justify his rehabilitation.[44] The oldest one, and their common source, would be *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione*, also called *Narratio historica in festum restitutionis imaginum* (*BHG* 1734), which draws on the narrative by George the Monk, but adds some information, such as that the martyrs of Amorion were transferred to Syria.[45] The last work in this set would be the *Vita Theodorae*, which would have been written by taking elements from the two previous works (George the Monk and the *Narratio*), according to the textual analyses carried out by Afinogenov.[46] The *Life* of the empress Theodora (*BHG* 1731)[47] can still not be dated with accuracy. Its two editors (Regel and Markopoulos) were inclined to think that it was composed shortly after her death (*post* 867),[48] which would have taken place during the first years of the reign of Basil I (867–886).[49]

De Theophili imperatoris absolutione narrates the definitive defeat of iconoclasm, includes the episode of Theoktistos' *enkolpion* as the trigger that prompted Theophilos' conversion,[50] and blames the virulence of the heresy on the patriarch John the Grammarian (834–843). After the latter was overthrown by Theodora, the spiritual leaders took the initiative (Ioannikios came down from the mountains to promote the restoration of Orthodoxy).[51] The veneration of images was re-established and the empress asked for her husband to be forgiven. The narrative ends with the ceremony of the restoration of images, the commemorative liturgy (although the procession had yet to feature) that would then be held annually as the Feast of Orthodoxy. Several versions emerged from this text (*De Theophili imperatoris absolutione*)[52] and even another three narratives written with the same purpose: to extol the figure of Theophilos and contribute to the pardon of his heresy. There thus appeared a *Brief Narration of the Absolution of Theophilos* (*BHG* 1732), an *Extensive Narration* (*BHG* 1733),[53] and even an independent encomium: *De Theophili imperatoris benefactis* (*BHG* 1735).[54] The last one is a tribute to the emperor, constructed around the same merits attributed to him by the tenth-century chroniclers (which coincide to a large degree with the attributes typical of the saints from the Second Iconoclasm):[55] he dispensed justice in person throughout the city, protected the poor, reinforced the walls of Constantinople to the benefit of its inhabitants, and founded numerous religious buildings, such as the church of Blachernae, among others.

Comparatively, *De Theophili imperatoris benefactis* is subsequent to the story of Theophilos' absolution, partly because it contains a positive encomium (proof that there already existed a receptive audience for a good image of the

iconoclast monarch), and above all because it mentions his rehabilitation as something already achieved.[56] This criterion also helps us to establish a comparative chronology with the *Life* of Theodora, which is also later: whereas *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione* exclusively addresses the redemption of Theophilos, the *Vita Theodorae* presents this episode as just another action taken by Theodora as wife and empress, and rather than the whole story revolving around him, it is presented simply as one more feat (successful and completed) of the empress.[57] Moreover, other arguments also indicate that *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione* was composed around the middle of the ninth century, shortly after the death of Theophilos: the utilitarian value of the text that, just as many *vitae* of the period, sought to have an immediate effect and promote the sanctification of the protagonist in question (the case of the *Life* of Euthymios of Sardis, composed forty days after his death in order to foster his veneration, is well known),[58] and Theodora's pressing need to legitimise her position and secure the empire for her little son. It was precisely at the beginning of her regency that the stability of her dynasty was most at risk: military or iconoclast factions could proclaim their own candidate as emperor (as had occurred with Leo III in 717), and therefore there was an urgent need to restore iconodule Orthodoxy. The stricter sectors, however, could challenge the dynastic rights of young Michael owing to his father's heresy, making the rehabilitation of Theophilos both necessary and urgent. Furthermore, other contemporary hagiographic sources are also very commendatory of Theophilos, as in the first two versions of the *Martyrdom of Amorion.* In the B version (*BHG* 1212)[59] and the P version (*BHG* 1214c),[60] both prior to the year 846,[61] the issue of images is not addressed, and Theophilos is praised as a great emperor, valiant and effective,[62] in addition to being the husband of the extremely pious Theodora.[63] These narratives of the martyrdom of the forty-two martyrs of Amorion, as well as the texts justifying the conversion and pardon of Theophilos, have come down to us as anonymous. Although we cannot identify their authors, it is logical to think that these works had their origins directly in the court, given that it had a clear interest in their speedy dissemination. *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione* pursued the pardon of the heresy of the emperor and the *Martyrdom of Amorion* was an attempt to exorcise the shameful campaign that led to the loss of the city, from which the reigning dynasty came, and its surrender to the Arabs. To rid the image of the sovereign of this disaster there was nothing better than the divulging of an official version in which his figure is barely scathed, the Byzantines are portrayed as orthodox and battle-hardened, and all blame is placed on the Muslim enemy.

We must therefore conclude that this was an eminently hagiographic and relatively early process that produced a series of texts which afterwards would be used by historians as source texts. The rehabilitation was immediately successful when the imperial family (Theodora and Michael III) was directly involved in it and had the blessing of the patriarch Methodios.[64] Only thus can it be understood how after the death of Ioannikios (his main backer for attaining the patriarchate)

on 3 November 846, the *vita* that Peter wrote in his honour (*BHG* 936) could harshly attack the Stoudite monks but not mention the iconoclast heresy or the name of the emperor Theophilos.[65] On the other hand, the revision of this hagiography made later on by Sabas (*BHG* 935) adds scenes of the persecution carried out by Theophilos and his defence of the heresy, furthermore describing it as 'very evil and terrible'.[66] Gradually, even though the political-ecclesiastical rehabilitation of Theophilos was already a fact, the hagiographies of the tenth century continued to paint a negative picture of him.[67]

Furthermore, the mention in *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione* of already deceased religious iconodule leaders among those who prayed for the Triumph of Orthodoxy and forgiveness for the sins of Theophilos, such as Theophanes the Confessor († 818), Theodore Stoudite († 826) or Theodore Graptos († 841),[68] is not a sign of the author's distance from the events. On the contrary, this was not a late and misinformed author addressing an audience who were unaware, owing to the passing of time, of who managed the restoration of Orthodoxy, but rather a coetaneous writer speaking to his contemporaries to disseminate his version of the facts. At the beginning of the narrative, in order to characterise the situation of the iconodules, there is a catalogue of the pillars of resistance against the Second Iconoclasm.[69] These same names are taken up again later and included among the architects of the success of the restoration. By means of the verb 'προσεκαλέσατο', the author is not only calling on the people (first meaning of the verb: 'to congregate'), but also convening these spiritual referents to join in the prayer (the derived meaning: 'to invoke'[70]). The hagiographer is aware of their demise and therefore ends the sentence with the expression 'those who had stood firm in virtue and the orthodox faith until death' (τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς ὀρθοδοξου πίστεως ἀντεχόμενοι μέχρι θανάτου).[71]

Textual transmission as a strengthening resource for the ruling dynasty

Finally, another aspect to be taken into account is the manuscript transmission of these narratives, which links them to the *Life* of another iconodule empress, Irene (*c*. 752–759 to August 803), the first restorer of images. The hagiography of Irene (*BHG* 2205)[72] is a cento constructed by means of the juxtaposition of materials relating to its protagonist that were included in the *Chronographia* by Theophanes. The eleventh-century codex *Vaticanus Graecus* 2014 contains the only preserved copy of the *Vita Irenes* in the folios 122v–136. Just after it comes the hagiography in honour of Theodora (folios 136v–143), followed by the brief narrative of Theophilos' good works (folios 143–143v), which closes the manuscript.[73] Far from being a case of chance, these three hagiographies were copied together because there was a propagandistic programme that tied them to the Triumph of Orthodoxy to thus promote the liturgical veneration of their protagonists.

It was the young Michael III who decided to promote the transfer of the body of the empress Irene from the Isle of Prinkipo[74] to the church of the Holy Apostles in

Constantinople.[75] None of the sources provide a date for this event, but we know from the *Vita Ignatii* (*BHG* 817) that in 861 the green marble sarcophagus in which Constantine V had rested was still in the mausoleum of Justinian, because that is where the deposed patriarch Ignatios was incarcerated after the Council.[76] Likewise, we know that it was used as building material in the construction of the church of Pharos, consecrated in 864 by the patriarch Photios.[77] Thus, the measure must have been taken between 861 and 864. By installing the remains of Irene in the mausoleum of Justinian in place of Constantine V, Michael not only insulted the memory of the iconoclast emperor, whose religious programme had been roundly condemned, but also established a *cordon sanitaire* that differentiated his father Theophilos from the iconoclast sovereigns, at the same time that it fostered the emergence of a typology of saint that his mother would fit: that of the empress restorer of Orthodoxy.

While this decision was being taken in Michael III's court, there appeared a *vita* in honour of empress Irene that was to help significantly in rehabilitating the memory of his father Theophilos: by juxtaposing this text with the hagiography of his wife Theodora, the image of the iconoclast emperor was whitewashed. The subsequent addition of the narrative of Theophilos' good works confirmed his religious absolution and his political rehabilitation. By means of this process,[78] the public image of emperor Theophilos went from being that of a mistreated personage to one of a protagonist beloved even by the iconodule authors, who absolved him of his crimes and empathically valued his good works. This aspect of the literary representation of the iconoclast emperor in hagiographic texts made a decisive contribution to the cultural creation of the imperial image. Furthermore, the promotion of devotion to the imperial family was a key factor in the reaffirmation of their hold on power. Added to this is the fact that the restoration of Orthodoxy was also a decisive element in the propaganda programme of the following emperors, as we see in the case of Leo VI and the Macedonian dynasty.[79]

Notes

1 This might be due to the empresses' crucial role in the restoration of the icons and their subsequent religious cult (quite popular and enthusiastic), along with the great appeal that these fascinating (female) figures have traditionally held for scholars (mainly men). All of them stand out for their saintliness, piety and, of course, their orthodoxy (i.e., they were strong iconodules). In general, see Delierneux 2014: 376–378. As regards Irene, see Halkin 1988a; Treadgold 1982; Garland 1999: 73–94; Herrin 2001: 51–129. For Theodora, see Markopoulos 1983; Vinson 1998; Garland 1999: 95–108; Herrin 2001: 185–239, and for Theophano, see Kurtz 1898; Diehl 1908: 187–192; Majeska 1977; Cesaretti 1988; Alexakis 1995; Garland 1999: 126–135.

2 Follieri 1972–73; Schreiner 1988: 323–332, 350–361; Auzépy 1990: 477–492; Rochow 1994: 43–72; Auzépy 1999: 65–79, 87–90, 281–288; Efthymiadis 2011: 99–113; Makris 2013; Detoraki 2014: 85–89.

3 Diehl 1931; Rosser 1983. As an historical figure, see *PmbZ* 8167; *PBE* 1: Theophilos 5; Treadgold 1988: 263–329, esp. 327–329; Signes Codoñer 2014.

4 Theoph. Cont. 100, 9–12. The dating of Theophilos' decree is uncertain. It is usually ascribed to the year 833 since the Abbasid court was considered to have imitated the measure when Al-Ma'mūn proclaimed an edict on the creation of the Koran and the birth of the Miḥna (the Inquisition), dated perfectly in 833, see Jokisch 2007: 500–501; Rosser 1983: 41–42. Warren Treadgold believes that this measure triggered a synod: Treadgold 1988: 280–281, 436 n. 386. For Theophilos' iconoclast policy, see Treadgold 1988: 277–281.

5 For the *Vita* of Peter of Atroa, see Laurent 1956: chap. 63–64. For the *Vita* of Niketas the Patrician, see Papachryssanthou 1968: 329, chap. 4. For the *Vita* of the Patriarch Ignatios, see Smithies and Duffy 2013: chap. 8 (*PG* 105: 493C) and chap. 14 (*PG* 105: 500A). For the *Vita* of the Patriarch Methodios, see *PG* 100: 1249D, 1253A. For that of Hilarion of Dalmatos, see Matantseva 1993: 22, col. 40.

6 Such was the case of John of Kathara (*SynaxCP* 633–634.35–38), Hilarion of Dalmatos (*SynaxCP* 733–734.45–50), Makarios of Pelekete (van den Gheyn 1897: 159.26), Symeon of Lesbos (van den Gheyn 1899: 238), the Graptoi brothers Theodore and Theophanes (Cunningham 1990: 70.23) and many others (van den Gheyn 1899: 239.17–18).

7 *SynaxCP* 231.9–234.7.

8 Van den Gheyn 1899: 239; *PG* 105: 900C–901B; Featherstone 1980; Cunningham 1990: 84.12–84.30. See also *Vita Antonii iunioris* (see Papadopulos-Kerameus 1907: chap. 31–32); *Vita Michaelis Syncelli* (see Cunningham 1990: 72.19–26; 74.27–31; 76.8–11; 78.23–80.1).

9 This was the 'true' battle of all those said to take place here, since Byzantine historians mention it on different occasions, giving rise to a certain amount of confusion. In reality, a few days before the fall of Amorion to the troops of al-Muʿtaṣim, Theophilos confronted Amer, the Emir of Melitene, actually called ʿAmr Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Aqta, 'The one-armed', in this enclave; see *PmbZ* 8552; Bury 1909.

10 According to the historians belonging to the group of the Logothete, see Pseudo-Symeon 636–637; Symeon Logothetes 130.28. See Varona Codeso 2010: 60.

11 Treadgold 1979: 182 onwards. For Manuel the Armenian, see *PmbZ* 4707; *PBE* 1: Manuel 6; Grégoire 1933a; Grégoire 1934; Brubaker and Haldon 2011: 424; Signes Codoñer 2014: 83–102. See also Hirsch 1876; Bury 1912: 143 onwards; Vasiliev and Canard 1935, vol. 1: 154 onwards. The many marvellous feats that the Byzantine chroniclers attribute to Manuel after this date have led some researchers to consider that Manuel survived the restoration.

12 Janin 1969: 320–321; Ruggieri 1991: 193.

13 *SynaxCP* 851.57. See Halkin 1954: 9–11. The bibliography concerning the hagiographic news of Manuel the *magistros* is abundant: see Grégoire 1933b; Mango 1977: 133–134; Duffy and Parker 1979: appendix II, 156; Signes Codoñer 2006; Varona Codeso 2010: 269–284; Signes Codoñer 2013.

14 *PmbZ* 8050; *PBE* 1: Theoktistos 3; Malyševskij 1887.

15 Symeon Logothetes 131.2 [232.5–6 Wahlgren]; Pseudo-Symeon, 647.7–9: ὑποθήκῃ δὲ καὶ παραινέσει Θεοκτίστου κανικλείου καὶ λογοθέτου. On the importance of the role played by Theoktistos, see Dvornik 1933: 34–45, 88–92.

16 Genesios 57.78–80.

17 Halkin 1954: 11–14. According to this author, his entry in a liturgical book was not possible prior to the second patriarchate of Ignatios (867–877) after the deaths of both his murderer, Caesar Bardas, and the emperor Michael, who had acquiesced to his murder.

18 *SynaxCP* 244.16–18; Halkin 1955: 57–58.

19 Gouillard 1987: chap. 18–19.339–381; Gouillard 1960: 40; Gouillard 1967: 126 n.51; Sénina 2009.

20 Gouillard 1987: 19.363: εἴχοντο πάλιν τοῦ μαστίζειν οἱ δείλαιοι.

21 *SynaxCP* 777.5–778.16. In regard to Sergios Niketiates see *PmbZ* 6664; *PBE* 1: Sergios 57; Grégoire 1933a: 515–531; Guilland 1971: 51, no. 11; Varona Codeso and Prieto Domínguez 2013.

22 A brief mention of him also appears in the *Acta Davidis*: see van den Gheyn 1899: 245.31. His body was transferred to the monastery of the Theotokos of Niketiates that he had founded on the Gulf of Nicomedia, see Janin 1969: 320–321; Ruggieri 1991: 227.

23 *PmbZ* 5929; *PBE* 1: Petronas 5; Halkin 1944; Guilland 1970: 597–598; Treadgold 1979: 175 onwards.

24 Van den Gheyn 1899: chap. 31, 252.15–22; Abrahamse and Domingo-Forasté 1998: 229–230; Karlin-Hayter 2004: 348. This prophecy was most likely taken from the history of Antony the Younger, either from his *vita*, or from historians such as the Continuator: see below. For Kazhdan 1984 this prediction allows the *Acta* to be dated to 863. See also van den Gheyn 1899: 245–246.

25 *PmbZ* 11651; See Papadopulos-Kerameus 1907: chap. 1, 187.5–24; chap. 44, 216.17–25; Halkin 1944: chap. 19. The traditional dating of this hagiography was deduced by Halkin 1944, 192–193 and 208, who affirmed that it would have been written between 877 and 886 or else during the period of reconciliation between the followers of Photios and Ignatios that Antony Kauleas made possible in 899. For her part, Martha Vinson considered the death of the empress Theophano (897) as the *terminus post quem* for this *vita*, since in her view it justifies the fourth marriage of Leo VI by presenting the father of Antony the Younger as remarrying, despite already having a male heir (Vinson 1998: 483–485). Her idea is seductive, but the attitude of Antony the Younger and his brothers abandoning their father shows that they did not approve of his new marriage, and therefore this text could hardly have been written at the court of Leo VI, during his second marriage. Moreover, the hagiographer affirms that he had visited St. Antony shortly before his death. This fact, added to the slightly later death of abbot Clement (in 868) and the absolute lack of posthumous miracles or events leads us to consider an earlier composition, not much later than 865.

26 Halkin 1944: chaps. 10–12.

27 Halkin 1944: chap. 15. The story is told in a slightly different way in the historians: John was a famous monk on Mount Latros, near Ephesus, well known for never leaving his cell. However, when he found out that Petronas was in the area, John set off to announce to him that he could count on God's protection and that he should place the image of St. John the Divine on his soldiers' shields as protection. After the victory, Petronas strongly praised the saint: see Theoph. Cont. 180.13–181.4, and 181.11–184.11; Skylitzes 100.27–32. In all likelihood it was not a matter of a different person, but actually Antony the Younger, called John here either in reference to his name before taking his vows, or owing to confusion with his spiritual father John. It is less likely that the historians had identified our saint with a later monk, as in *PmbZ* 22966 or *PmbZ* 23246.

28 Halkin 1944: chap. 16.

29 Janin 1969: 306–307.

30 Halkin 1944: chap. 17–18, see Theoph. Cont. 4.25 (183–184), where the saint predicts his own death and that of Petronas shortly thereafter. We owe the chronology of the life of Antony to Halkin, who starts with the date of the saint's death: see Halkin 1944: 195–197. This chronology has been widely accepted: see Tanner 1997.

31 Halkin 1944: chap. 10–18.

32 As regards the different treatment of this episode in the sources preserved, see Gouillard 1967: 124–125; Karlin-Hayter 2001; Varona Codeso 2010: 77–80 and 201–204; Brubaker and Haldon 2011: 448–450.

33 Theoph. Cont. 152.1–153.8. Markopoulos 1998; Afinogenov 1996: 58–61; Afinogenov 1999a. Concerning the different dignitaries that surrounded Theodora and the influence they had on her, see Mango 1977: 134–135 and 139–141.

34 Van den Gheyn 1899: 249 onwards.
35 Pseudo-Symeon 651.11–13; Vinson 1995.
36 Van den Gheyn 1899: 242–246. Note that in the hagiography of the saints of Lesbos, the Stylite Symeon is the only one responsible for this absolution, to the detriment of the empress Theodora and the future patriarch Methodios, whose divine visions and intercessions for his soul are brushed aside: see van den Gheyn 1899: chap. 26, 242.35–243.2; Karlin-Hayter 2006.
37 Markopoulos 1983: 264–265, chap. 8; Timotin 2010: 143–149. In the post-iconoclast period 'dream literature' became fashionable: see Dagron 1985: 47–51; Markopoulos 1998: 45.
38 Regel 1891: 33–35; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 231; Afinogenov 2004a: 106, 325. On the Chalke Gate, see Mango 1959.
39 Regel 1891: 36–37; Gouillard 1967: 125.
40 Rosenqvist 1986: chap. 2.18–24. This *vita* is dated at the end of the tenth century (c. 980: Rosenqvist 1986: XXVIII), revealing the success of Theophilos' absolution process.
41 Grierson 1962: 53; Symeon Logothetes 248–249; Pseudo-Symeon, 681. Karlin-Hayter 1991: 382 n. 41, wonders whether Constantine's corpse might have served as an exchange demanded by the ecclesiastical sectors for conceding absolution to Theophilos.
42 Markopoulos 1998.
43 As Afinogenov 1999b and 2004b proved, basing himself on the long quotes that George includes from the *Refutatio et Eversio* by the patriarch Nicephorus, from his rejection of Thomas the Slav and from his ignorance of the fate of the forty-two martyrs of Amorion, executed in 845.
44 Among which is also the *Epistula synodica ad Theophilum* (*BHG* 1386): see Markopoulos 1998: 41 and 48; Munitiz 1997; Gauer 1994; Signes Codoñer 2014: 367–408.
45 Edited by Regel 1891: 19–39; Combefis 1648; Afinogenov 2004a.
46 Afinogenov 1999b: 442–444; Afinogenov 1997: 16; Afinogenov 2004a: 78–88.
47 The traditional edition of *Vita Theodorae* by Regel 1891: 1–43, was surpassed by Markopoulos 1983. There is an English translation by Vinson 1998. See *SynaxCP* 458–460 (11 February).
48 Kazhdan 1986: 154; Karlin-Hayter 1990; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 228–229. See *PmbZ* 7286; *PBE* 1: Theodora 2.
49 Regel 1891: XIII; Markopoulos 1983: 251–256.
50 Regel 1891: 33–35. An interesting precedent legitimised this conversion: the iconoclast patriarch Paul (780–784) forswore iconoclasm when he fell ill and saw death coming, retiring to the monastery of Phloros to die in peace: see Theoph. 457,14–17; Efthymiadis 1998: chap. 8–11. His repentance won him an entry in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, where he is remembered on 31 August: see *SynaxCP* 933.53 and following; Lilie 1999: 271–276. For Paul, see *PmbZ* 5829; *PBE* 1: Paulos 4.
51 Afinogenov 1999a.
52 One of them, *BHG* 1734a, has been edited by Halkin 1988b.
53 Athen. EBE 2487 (*olim* Kosinitza 236), twelfth–thirteenth century, Ehrhard 1952, vol. 2: 756–757.
54 Regel 1891: 40–43; Combefis 1648: 739A–743A.
55 Theoph. Cont., 86–88; 92–94; 107; Skylitzes, 50–51; 54–55; Laiou 1994: 151–153 and 162; Markopoulos 1998: 40.
56 Regel 1891: 43.
57 Kazhdan's proposal, according to which the *Vita Theodorae* came before the narrative that describes Theophilos' absolution, is hardly defendable: see Kazhdan 1986: 154.

58 Gouillard 1987.
59 Vasilevski and Nikitin 1905; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 219.
60 Halkin 1986: 152–161.
61 Kotzambases 1992: 126. See also Kolia–Dermitzaki 2002.
62 Vasilevski and Nikitin 1905: 11.22–25.
63 Halkin 1986: 154.
64 Thus, the proposal to date the writing of the texts concerning Theophilos' rehabilitation in the tenth century is too late. The justification by Kazhdan 1986: 154, who sees in them a counter-propaganda tool against the policies of Constantine VII, is not convincing. The view of Markopoulos 1998: 47–48, that the case of Theophilos is similar to that of Basil I, in which there is a gradual improvement in his image, receiving more and more praise, clashes with the hagiographic testimonies about Theophilos: see below. For his part, Afinogenov 2004a: 84, situates them vaguely at the end of the ninth century, on the basis that interpolations already existed in the tenth century.
65 Van den Gheyn 1894a; Sullivan 1998.
66 Van den Gheyn 1894b: chap. 36, 42, 45–46.
67 *Vita Demetriani* (*BHG* 495), see Grégoire 1907: 221.153; *Vita Ioannic. Metaphr.* (*BHG* 937), see *PG* 116: 81B–D (chap. 47) and 84D (chap. 50); *Vita Theodori grapti* (*BHG* 1746), see *PG* 116: 668C; 672A; 681B; *Synax. Josephi hymnographi* (*BHG* 947b), see *SynaxCP* 582.19–20; *Commentarius de imagine Deiparae τῆς Πορταϊτίσσης* (*BHG* 1070), see Bury 1897: 91.
68 Regel 1891: 31–32; Afinogenov 2004a: 106. See also Markopoulos 1983: 262; Gouillard 1967: 123–124 and 145–146.
69 Regel 1891: 24–26; Afinogenov 2004a: 92.51–74.
70 Also used, for example, to invoke a spirit or deceased saint; see Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* (recensio G), 60, 12–15: καθεσθεῖσα προσκαλεῖται τὸν μάρτυρα λέγουσα· "Εὐλόγησόν μου τὰ βρώματα, ἅγιε Κόλλουθε, καὶ συνόδευσόν μοι ταῖς προσευχαῖς σου" (Bartelink 1974).
71 Regel 1891: 31–32; Afinogenov 2004a: 106.300–301.
72 Halkin 1988a; Treadgold 1982; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 217; see also *SynaxCP* 877.56–57.
73 Franchi de' Cavalieri and Hagiographi Bollandiani 1902: 14–15, where this manuscript is dated to the eleventh century. For Ihor Ševčenko, it corresponds to the twelfth century: see Treadgold 1982: 237 n. 2. See also Canart and Peri 1970: 671.
74 For the monastery at Prinkipo dedicated to the Theotokos see Janin 1975: 69.
75 *De cer.* 2.42; version L of the *Catalogus sepulchrorum*.
76 Smithies and Duffy 2013: chap. 35 (*PG* 105: 521).
77 Mango 1958: 180–181, *Homily* 10; Jenkins and Mango 1956; Grierson 1962: 33–34, 53–54 and 55; Janin 1969: 232–236; Ruggieri 1991: 198–199.
78 Which shows dynamics similar to those of family cults: see Talbot 1996; Métivier 2012; Flusin 2012; Kaplan 2013.
79 Vogt and Hausherr 1932; Tougher 1994; Tougher 1997; Vinson 2003; Tsiaples 2014.

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12

SPLENDOUR, VIGOUR, AND LEGITIMACY

The prefaces of the *Book of Ceremonies* (*De cerimoniis*) and Byzantine imperial theory

Prerona Prasad

Introduction

By the time that Constantine VII was able to rule in his own right, after the coups of December 944 and January 945 had removed Romanos I Lekapenos and, subsequently, his sons Stephen and Constantine Lekapenos, he would have been acutely conscious of the fact that these men had prevented him from exercising power for a quarter of a century.[1] An emperor by birth and raised in the palace, Constantine had been kept from any imperial decision-making throughout his youth by a man he characterised as an 'ἰδιώτης καὶ ἀγράμματος ἄνθρωπος', a common and illiterate man who had neither been reared in the imperial palace, guided by the customs of the Romans, nor had any claim to an imperial bloodline.[2] The lack of codified laws of imperial succession in Byzantium meant that emperors often faced questions of their legitimacy to rule, mere effectiveness as a leader being no guarantee of longevity in office.[3] In times of uncertainty, the lack of defined attributes of the emperor could lead to waves of political instability and competing claims. Conversely, any emperor with a desire to define imperial legitimacy could try to create his own criteria. Through imperially sanctioned texts, visual depictions, and the symbolism of ceremony, an incumbent emperor could isolate those aspects of the imperial office which he most valued, or which placed his particular lineage or abilities at the forefront, and project them as the definitive attributes of legitimate rule. In the case of Constantine VII, the time spent under Lekapenid rule engendered a response that is far deeper than has ever been witnessed before. In the imperial worldview that developed under Constantine VII, once an imperial dynasty had been established by an individual with the correct genetic and moral credentials, these virtues could flow into each succeeding generation through the bloodline and through paternal instruction, giving scions of imperial families the unquestionable right to rule.

Imperial ideology in Byzantium, the underpinnings of imperial power, and the modalities of the transfer of rule in dynastic succession have been subjects of considerable debate. Gilbert Dagron's insightful and wide-ranging work on the imperial office in Byzantium outlined many of the ways in which dynastic rule was promoted across the centuries.[4] In the case of the Macedonians, Basil I was very quick to associate his sons with his imperium, and was portrayed alongside his family in a variety of media, including manuscripts and mosaic schemes. With Leo VI, the naming of his son as a *porphyrogennetos*, someone who was automatically in the imperial line of succession at birth even before being proclaimed emperor, all went some way in bringing the next generation into the political eye early, thereby improving its chances of succession when the time came. Associations were made between the emperors and Old Testament dynasts like David and Solomon, something also examined in some detail by Paul Magdalino in several articles.[5] Dagron's overall assessment of all attempts to create a dynastic ideology with some traction, before the rise of the Komnenoi, is pessimistic. In his view, the minority of princes of the blood of the Macedonian house when they came to power (in the case of Constantine VII and then his grandsons Basil II and Constantine VIII) allowed newcomers to usurp the imperial office by marrying into the family and bypassing the *porphyrogennetoi*. Dagron's view falls short of explaining the dynastic resilience of the Macedonians, who came back from not one, but two, decades-long spells of waiting in the wings. All three so-called 'newcomers', Romanos I Lekapenos, Nikephoros II Phokas, and John I Tzimiskes, bound themselves to the Macedonian line through marriage alliances, but were unable to secure the succession for members of their own families. This might be due to their neglect of ideology, hoping that worldly success alone could carry them through. Equally, without developing a distinct ideology of emperorship as patrimonial gift, they found it difficult to shrug off their origins in the powerful provincial aristocracy, where their nephews, cousins, and kinsmen could claim the same right to rule.

The 'newcomer' who came closest to bringing the Macedonian dynasty to an early end was Romanos Lekapenos, who associated his sons with his rule by declaring them co-emperors in 921 and 924.[6] By 927 the pretence of Constantine VII's precedence over Romanos' sons was removed when Christopher superseded him after the marriage of his daughter Maria to Peter of Bulgaria.[7] After the Bulgarian crisis was resolved by Tsar Symeon's death and peace was cemented through the marriage between Maria and Peter, successes on the eastern front accrued to Romanos regularly and he evolved, for all intents and purposes, into a fairly successful emperor. His downfall in a family feud brought Constantine VII to power at the age of thirty-nine. Constantine owed his position to the rivalry between the Lekapenoi and powerful provincial families like the Argyroi and the Phokades and benefitted from his early supporters acquiescing to his control over the palace, the capital, and the central administration. He then attempted to reformulate imperial ideology to explain this phenomenon which was unprecedented in Byzantine history, the restoration of a dynasty without bloodshed, and the coming to power, after a substantial interregnum, of emperors who had never wielded imperial power before.

Like his father before him, Constantine VII was a man of letters, although the subject matter that he chose to commission was often different, as was, it is fair to say, the intellectual capacity of the son in relation to the father.[8] Oblivious to any deficiencies, Constantine's literary atelier churned out a prodigious number of texts, from treatises, to orations, histories, hagiography, and historical compendia. Three principal works attributed to Constantine himself, or which were closely supervised by him and produced in his name, provide insights into his conception of the role of the emperor. These works are the *Vita Basilii*, the imperially sponsored biography of the emperor Basil I; the *De administrando imperio*, a περί ἐθνῶν ostensibly compiled for the young Romanos II to instruct him in the ways of foreigners; and the *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, a compendium of centuries of imperial ceremonial practices. This chapter will concentrate on one small segment of this large corpus, the prefaces to Books One and Two of the *De cerimoniis*, which encapsulate many of Constantine's preoccupations after he was able to rid himself of the Lekepenoi, namely: right order, the majesty of the imperial office, and the characteristics of legitimate rule.

The *De cerimoniis* and imperial theory

The *De cerimoniis* was conceived as a treatise on imperial ceremonial in two books. The first was to be a book on past ceremonies, which were collected from a variety of now-lost sources from the sixth to the ninth centuries. The second was envisaged as a collection of current ceremonial 'which did not have a written account', but had been passed down 'through memory' to Constantine's day.[9] The text of the *De cerimoniis* does not, however, come down to us in the form that Constantine or his atelier of compilers had intended. Most of Book One (chapters one to eighty-three of ninety-seven chapters) and considerably less of Book Two (chapters one to fourteen and the first section of chapter fifteen out of fifty-six chapters) was probably put together in its final form by the end of Constantine's reign (959), although they were left, in a reasonably orderly fashion, in dossiers and not compiled into a single manuscript.[10] The archetype of the text which we now know as the *De cerimoniis* is the *Lipsiensis*, a manuscript in a single hand, most probably copied for the eunuch Basil Lekapenos, Constantine's brother-in-law and the long-serving *parakoimomenos*, at some time after 963.[11] This took Book One and Book Two of Constantine's text and added to it a variety of texts on specific, datable ceremonies, inventories of expeditions to Crete and Italy, texts on the content of verbal and written addresses to foreign visitors and correspondents, and a series of miscellaneous treatises and notices. An analysis of the constituent parts of the *Lipsiensis* is beyond the purview of this chapter, but this work has progressed greatly since the foundational articles by J.B. Bury appeared in 1907, and considerable research has been conducted into identifying and dating the various sections of the text, most recently by Michael Featherstone.[12]

Both books of the *De cerimoniis* begin with prefaces in a higher classicising style than the rest of the content, which set out the rationale behind the undertaking.

Preface One begins defensively, castigating those who might think that a work on imperial ceremonial was superfluous, condemning these naysayers for not taking special care of the 'necessary things'. The purpose of orderly and 'praiseworthy' ceremonial is quickly made apparent. It was to make the imperial office more beautiful and to inspire awe in both foreigners and the emperor's own people.

> . . .διὰ τῆς ἐπαινετῆς τάξεως τῆς βασιλείου ἀρχῆς δεικνυμένης κοσμιωτέρας καὶ πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημονέστερον ἀνατρεχούσης καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θαυμαστῆς οὔσης ἔθνεσί τε καὶ ἡμετέροις.
>
> . . .through praiseworthy ceremonial the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is the cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people.[13]

The gathering of records of ceremonial was akin to plucking flowers in the meadows to decorate the imperial majesty.

> . . .καὶ ὥσπερ τινὰ ἄνθη ἐκ λειμώνων δρεψαμένους εἰς ἀσύγκριτον εὐπρέπειαν τῇ βασιλικῇ παραθέσθαι λαμπρότητι. . .
>
> It was as though we were picking flowers from the meadows to set as an incomparable decoration for the imperial splendour. . .[14]

It was like placing a newly-fashioned mirror in the middle of the palace in which all the things that brought honour to the imperial rule and the senatorial body could be seen in their true radiance.

> . . .καὶ οἷόν τι κάτοπτρον διαυγὲς καὶ νεόσμηκτον ἐν μέσοις τοῖς ἀνακτόροις ἱδρύσασθαι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ τῇ βασιλείῳ ἀρχῇ πρέποντα καὶ τὰ τῷ συγκλητικῷ συστήματι ἄξια κατοπτευόμενα. . .
>
> . . .and as if we were setting up in the middle of the palace a radiant and newly formed mirror in which are seen what befits the imperial rule and what is worthy of the senatorial body. . .[15]

It was not just the wielding of power which was deemed important; through ceremonial the exercise of power could be made more orderly and beautiful, in imitation of heavenly order.

> ὑφ' ὧν τοῦ βασιλείου κράτους ῥυθμῷ καὶ τάξει φερομένου, εἰκονίζοι μὲν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τὴν περὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἁρμονίαν καὶ κίνησιν. . .
>
> Through this (correct ceremonial) the imperial power will have measure and order, reflecting the harmony of the creator in relation to the whole. . .[16]

Further justification for the compilation of the treatise is provided in Preface Two. According to this preface, ceremonial was the way in which the emperor's power could appear more imperial and terrifying.

διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν συλλογὴν ταύτην καὶ μή τισι πονηθεῖσαν ἄλλοις τῆς ακτικῆς διανέστημεν μεθόδου, τὴν μὲν βασιλείαν ταύτῃ βασιλικωτέραν καὶ φωβερωτέραν ἀποδεικνύντες·

For these reasons then, we embarked on an orderly plan also for this present collection, achieved by no other, thus showing the emperor's power as more imperial and terrifying.[17]

The treatise claimed to provide instruction to both the senatorial class and the ordinary subjects on how to live an orderly life, with correct comportment, so as to gain the love of their emperor, and be admired by every nation. These are lofty claims for a treatise that deals mainly with palace ceremonial, witnessed mainly by palace officials and high-ranking members of the imperial administration. Ordinary residents of the city did participate in both palace and hippodrome ceremonial as representatives of demes, their dress and acclamations choreographed to the last letter. The true value of ceremonial was no doubt in its repetitive enactment of the Byzantine social order, with each constituent part having a rigidly delineated role to play, with every movement choreographed and every word uttered in the imperial presence scripted – the *De cerimoniis* provides us with detailed descriptions of the entries and exits and of all the words spoken in the presence of the emperor during ceremonial occasions.

While the prefaces in the *De cerimoniis* lay out the benefits of orderly and splendid ceremonial, they also dwell on the perils of ignoring ceremonial. In Preface One, Constantine compares the effect on the imperial office of the disorder caused by the neglect of correct ceremonial to a badly formed body, with its limbs lying in a confused and disharmonious way.

Ὥσπερ γὰρ σώματος μὴ εὐσχημόνως διαπεπλασμένου, ἀλλὰ φύρδην καὶ οὐκ εὐαρμόστως τῶν μελῶν αὐτῷ συγκειμένων ἀταξίαν ἄν τις τὸ τοιοῦτον προσείποι· οὕτω καὶ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ πολιτεύματος μὴ τάξει ἀγομένου καὶ κυβερνωμένου, κατ' οὐδὲν διοίσει τῆς ἰδιωτικῆς καὶ ἀνελευθέρου διαγωγῆς.

For just as when a body is not harmoniously fashioned, but has its limbs set in a contorted and ill-coordinated way, one would describe this as a disorder, so too when the imperial administration is not led and governed by order, it will differ in no way from an ignorant and servile way of life.[18]

In Preface Two, the analogy of physical affliction is carried further.

. . .οὐ δίκαιον οὖν ᾠήθημεν κόσμον τοσοῦτον τάξεων ἀσύντακτον παριδεῖν, καὶ, ὅσον δήπου τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, τὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δόξης καταλιπεῖν ἀκρωτηριάζεσθαι καίρια. ὡς γὰρ, ἐν σώματί τινι τῆς κεφαλῆς πονηρῶς ἐχούσης, ὅ γε μὴ τὰ πρὸς θεραπείαν πάντα προσαγαγὼν κατὰ τοῦ παντὸς

> ἔτυχε τὸν κίνδυνον ἐπιφέρων, οὕτως οἶμαι καὶ ὁ τοῦ κοινοῦ τοῦδε τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς πολιτείας σώματος τῷ μεγαλειοτέρῳ μέρει καὶ ὑπερέχοντι κακῶς ἔχοντι μὴ τὰ πρὸς θεραπείαν τε καὶ ὁλοκληρίαν προσενεγκὼν καὶ τὰ παρὰ τὴν ἀταξίαν κάμνοντα συνάγων καὶ συγκροτῶν τοῦ τε δήμου κοινῇ καὶ τῆς πολιτείας ἠμεληκὼς ἔσται καὶ τὸ σύμπαν ἅμα αθῃρηκώς.
>
> Consequently we thought it was not right . . . to allow vital aspects of the imperial glory to be amputated. Thus, just as with a body, when the head is in poor condition, anyone who does not provide what is needed for its cure . . . will have been equally negligent towards both the people and the state, and, at the same time, destructive of the whole.[19]

The neglect of good ceremonial practice is akin to the physical amputation or mutilation of vital aspects of the imperial glory. The state is compared to a body, with the imperial office at the head; any disorder in the latter, if not cured by all means necessary, could endanger the whole and lead to the destruction of both the people and the state. Ceremonial is thus the central nervous system of the body politic, which reminds the other parts of the body of their role in the whole. The emperor at the head had the responsibility of coordinating the rest of the body, instructing its constituent parts on how to perform their functions in a harmonious way. The metaphor of an afflicted head endangering the rest of the body is also used in an early novel issued by Constantine to prevent the surrender of the properties of the στρατιῶται to the powerful.

> Ὥσπερ ἐν σώματι κεφαλή, οὕτως ἐν πολιτείᾳ στράτευμα, ὧν οὕτως ἢ ἑτέπως ἐχόντων ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ πᾶν συμμεταβάλλεσθαι·
>
> As the head is to the body, so is the army to the state; as their condition varies, so too must the whole undergo a similar change.[20]

This time the body is the state apparatus and the head is the army, upon which the state depended for its survival.

The 'ignorant' and 'servile' state of imperial ceremonial, which Constantine strove to remedy through his efforts, was shown to be the legacy of the Lekapenid interregnum, which had neglected all that Constantine was to proclaim as vital for maintaining the imperial majesty in the *De cerimoniis* and in the *De administrando imperio*. When Constantine bemoans the neglect of the ancestral customs, he is not blaming it on *all* previous rulers, but only those who did not turn their minds to the preservation of custom and ancient knowledge. He borrows a page from his father Leo VI's *Taktika*, which, in its introduction claims that the εὐταξία or good order of the Roman army had been banished to oblivion because commanders did not know the basics of tactics and strategy as set out by early writers. It was from the threshold of oblivion that Constantine claims to have saved records of ceremonial.

Ἕως μὲν γάρ, ὡς ἔοικε, τὰ κατὰ πολέμους Ῥωμαίοις ἐν εὐταξίᾳ ὄντα ἐτύγχανε, τῆς τε ἐπ' οὐκ ὀλίγους χρόνους θείας ἀπέλαυε βοηθείας τὸ κράτος . . . νῦν δὲ τῆς τακτικῆς τε καὶ στρατηγικῆς καταστάσεως ἐπ' οὐκ ὀλίγους χρόνους ἀμελουμένης, ἵνα μὴ λέγω καὶ εἰς παντελῆ περιελθούσης λήθην, ὡς μηδὲ αὐτὰ τὰ πρόχειρα τοὺς στρατηγεῖν ἐγχειροῦντας ἐπίστασθαι, πολλὰ δυσχερῆ διαφόρως ὁρῶμεν συμβαίνοντα.

For, so it seems, as long as the armed forces of the Romans were in good order, the state enjoyed divine assistance for not a few years . . . But, for many years now, the pursuit of tactics and strategy has been neglected, not to say fallen so completely into oblivion that those assuming the command of an army do not understand even the most obvious matters.[21]

. . .ἐξίτηλά τε ὄντα ἤδη καὶ τῷ γέροντι χρόνῳ συγγεγηρακότα, καὶ ὅσον οὔπω πρὸς ἀνυπαρξίαν περιστήσεσθαι μέλλοντα, ἡμετέραις ἐπιμελείαις φιλοπόνως συναθροισθέντα. . .

They (records of ceremonial) were already fading, grown old with the passage of time, and were almost on the threshold of oblivion when they were diligently collected by our efforts. . .[22]

Like Leo, he too asserts that the gathering of lost knowledge was such a pressing concern that it was a fitting task for the emperor himself to undertake. The theme of having found everything in a neglected state also permeates the sympathetic account of Constantine's reign in the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, which was certainly compiled by someone who knew the emperor's cherished projects well and probably worked in his literary atelier. Finding all things in an unusable and neglected state, Constantine is said to have embarked upon a course of restoration and improvement, paying special attention to training in rhetoric, philosophy, and the material world, to restoring imperial vestments and crowns (so minutely described in the *De cerimoniis*), to repairing the Hall of the Nineteen Couches, and to embellishing the Chrysotriklinos (the room most frequently used for imperial ceremonial and receptions in the imperial palace).[23]

The narrative of the 'Macedonian Restoration'

It is clear from the prefaces and from the encomium in Theophanes Continuatus that Constantine VII desired his personal rule to be viewed as a Macedonian Restoration; not just the reinvigoration of all worthy pursuits with the legitimate emperor at the helm, but the heralding of a reversion of all things back to their correct natural order. This is a good juncture at which to revisit the charges levelled against Romanos Lekapenos in the *De administrando imperio* 13, which represents the fullest *psogos* of Romanos to be found in any work emanating from Constantine's hand. Romanos' sponsorship of the marriage between his granddaughter Maria and Peter the Bulgarian is condemned in the

harshest possible terms. Such a decision could have only been taken by a man like Romanos, who was ignorant and illiterate, had not been raised in the palace or been tutored in the imperial customs of the Romans, and was of neither imperial nor noble stock.

> Ὁ κύρις Ῥωμανός, ὁ βασιλεύς, ἰδιώτης καὶ ἀγράμματος ἄνθρωπος ἦν, καὶ οὔτε τῶν ἄνωθεν ἐν βασιλείοις τεθραμμένων, οὔτε τῶν παρηκολουθηκότων ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἐθισμοῖς, οὔτε ἀπὸ γένους βασιλείου καὶ εὐγενοῦς. . .
>
> The lord Romanos, the emperor was a common, illiterate fellow, and not from among those who have been raised in the palace, and have followed the Roman customs from the beginning; nor was he of imperial or noble birth. . .[24]

The only place for transmission of knowledge about the imperial customs, in Constantine VII's conception, was the palace, with its repository of texts and treatises, and through its living ceremonial. In creating this argument to denounce decisions made by Romanos Lekapenos, Constantine VII would have had to confront his own grandfather's obscure origins. The myth of Basil I's descent from the Arsacids on his father's side and from Constantine the Great and Alexander on his mother's side might have been propagated at an earlier stage in the development of the Macedonian dynasty, possibly through the brilliant political mind of Photios, but it is elucidated in great detail in Constantine's *Vita Basilii*, as are signs and portents which foretold Basil's rise to the imperial office.[25] In the *Vita Basilii*, Basil is called the ῥίζα of empire, or the imperial root.[26] His lack of a palace upbringing was not a problem, as it is alleged to have been for Romanos Lekapenos, as Basil's father was deemed sufficiently high born to have instructed his son in all that was 'excellent and praiseworthy'. This crucial boyhood education of son by father is evoked by Constantine in prefaces to the *De administrando imperio* and to the third treatise on imperial expeditions found in the Leipzig manuscript of the *De cerimoniis*. In the *De administrando imperio*, Constantine exhorts his son Romanos II to take heed to his instruction as this was the way in which he could become prudent, wise, and blessed by the people and the nations.[27] The preface to the third treatise on imperial expeditions is even more explicit in its declaration that it was impossible to learn about being an emperor through one's own natural abilities – one had to be instructed in the 'noble precepts' of imperial rule by one's father. The title to this section is interesting in itself as, in it, Constantine's lineage back to Basil I is traced.

> ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤῼ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ ΑΙΩΝΙῼ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ, ΥΙΟΥ ΛΕΟΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΟΙΔΙΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΟΦΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, ΑΠΟΓΟΝΟΥ ΔΕ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΙΚΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΓΕΝΝΑΙΟΤΑΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΝΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΣΤΕΦΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ ΚΑΙ ΥΙΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ.

> Constantine, emperor of the Romans in Christ the eternal emperor, son of Leo the famous and most wise emperor, descendant of Basil the most courageous and noble emperor, to Romanos the God-crowned emperor and his son.[28]

Even if Constantine had been too young when his father died to have learned from him directly, it was through his writings and treatises that he could educate himself. Constantine VII's exhortations to his son can certainly be seen to indicate that imperial texts could stand in for the emperor and provide instruction through the written word.

The Lekapenid usurpation was therefore viewed as a break in the rightful chain of transmission of both the imperial office as well as the knowledge of those things that it behoved an emperor to know. If Constantine is to be believed, the knowledge of the ancient customs was passed down through those who had seen them in action in the past and through their correct performance in the present day. Innovation was not anathema in this scheme of things, but it took an educated emperor, who understood the older form of the ceremony, to make appropriate and seemly changes to it as the circumstances demanded. Through knowledge of the old ways, the emperor was also at liberty to incorporate traditions from the deeper past into current ceremonial. We know that the prefaces of the *De cerimoniis* are not just empty rhetoric; it seems certain that Constantine believed what he was writing. For example, the study of ancient ceremonial certainly led Constantine to revive the practice of ritual humiliation or *calcatio collies* as described in Book 2.19 of the *De cerimoniis*.[29] Although no record of this was left in the dossier that was to become the *De cerimoniis*, Constantine also revived the practice of direct imperial baptism of pagan potentates in Constantinople, something that is not attested in the sources since the reign of Heraclius.[30]

Thus, the prefaces in the *De cerimoniis* stand as a dire warning of what could happen to the imperial majesty after even a few decades of illegitimate or ignorant rule. Whether or not Romanos Lekapenos truly disregarded ceremonial and allowed the debasement of the imperial majesty is immaterial. In the revised conception of the foundations of imperial power, formulated by Constantine during his years in the political wilderness, and formulated moreover in opposition to the rule of a dynasty with little known interest in learning, lawgiving, or the study of imperial culture, the rule of Romanos Lekapenos had ruptured the natural order. The early Macedonians under Basil I and Leo VI had been active curators of the cult of the imperial family in image and word, while at the same time exercising the traditional attributes of Roman emperors, such as lawgiving. Constantine VII, on the other hand, had to do something radically different to try and safeguard the interests of his dynasty after the quarter-century of Lekapenid rule. He had to create a narrative of the restoration of legitimate rule and order, which would set his regime apart from one that, despite several early plots and coups, had functioned fairly well until the political cataclysm at the end, set off from within Romanos Lekapenos's own family, which destroyed it.

This restoration message is writ large in the prefaces to the *De cerimoniis*. The neglect of correct ceremonial order is a metaphor for the setting aside of the legitimate ruler, Constantine VII, by Romanos Lekapenos in 919–920. The disordered body with its limbs in utter confusion, the mutilation of the imperial office, the afflicted head bringing the rest of the body to the brink of destruction, are all ways in which Constantine wanted the readers of the *De cerimoniis* to visualize the Byzantine empire under the Lekapenoi. Dynastic change was commonplace in Byzantium, with even Constantine VII conceding that imperial rule was 'given by God in the ways that He knows, and often to those who are not worthy'.[31] What Constantine was aspiring to attach to the Macedonian house was the aura of worthy rule, which could restore the empire to glory after an unworthy rule, willed by Providence for mysterious reasons. Only the newly restored, worthy emperor could remedy the situation, falling back on his years in the palace and his imperial pedigree to discern what was orderly and beautiful and what was ignorant and slavish.

In Constantine's restoration narrative, it was 'paternal inheritance', both through a bloodline and an intellectual line, that was the most valuable predictor of worthy rule, and this was what the third-generation emperor claimed set the Macedonian dynasty apart. This paternal legacy was one which Constantine was keen to pass on to his son as we have seen in the course of this chapter, as transmission of imperial qualities was shown to take place only through consanguinity and the tutelage of the father. Unlike the *De administrando imperio*, which was intended only for the eyes of the successor, Romanos II, and perhaps some trusted advisors, the *De cerimoniis* text could have been envisaged as something that could have been more widely read, at least by the palace officials and the civil bureaucracy. This is why the condemnation of the Lekapenoi could not be as overt and had to be couched in metaphor. The palace, which housed not only the imperial family and the household staff, but also the administrative bureaux, was the greatest bastion of the emperor, filled with those who could be expected to have the greatest loyalty to the imperial family in times of crisis.

Conclusion: The restoration narrative and other experiments in imperial image-making

To conclude, it would be inaccurate to say that the theme of restoration was Constantine VII's only experiment with imperial image-making. We see the emperor going one better than his grandfather, who was only shown to have been crowned by the prophet Elijah in his imperial iconography, by appearing to be crowned by Christ himself.[32] Wary of the cults of military saints proliferating under the patronage of the provincial Anatolian aristocracy, he strove to associate himself with the same saints and their military virtues.[33] He even went so far as to imitate God as well as Christ on the battlefield, willing his soul to enter into the bodies of Byzantine combatants to spur them to victory.

> τὰ μὲν ἱερὰ τοῦ θείου εὐαγγελίου λόγια τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς μέγεθος πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δηλῶσαι βουλόμενά φησιν· οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ δέδωκεν εἰς θάνατον, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ τὸν μονογενῆ υἱὸν, ἀλλ' ἐμαυτὸν ὅλον καὶ σώματι καὶ ψυχῇ ὑμῖν ἐπιδίδωμι καὶ προσηλῶ καὶ ἀναμίγνυμι τὰς ἐμὰς σάρκας ταῖς ὑμετέραις σαρξὶ καὶ ὀστᾶ τοῖς ὀστέοις, καὶ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν μέλων ὡς συμπεφυκὸς καὶ συγγεννηθὲν μεθ' ὑμῶν λογίζομαι, αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν καίπερ μίαν οὖσαν ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν διαμερίζω καὶ διαιρῶ, καὶ τῷγε κατ' ἐμαυτὸν μέρει ὑπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ψυχοῦσθαι καὶ ζωογονεῖσθαι τὸν ἐμὸν θεοσύλλεκτον βούλομαι λαόν.
>
> The sacred word of the holy Gospel . . . say *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son* unto death, whereas I give not my only begotten son but my whole being, in body and soul, and I link and mix my flesh with your flesh, and my bones with your bones, and I consider each one of my limbs united with and of common origin with you, and I want my host assembled to be made animate and to be brought alive by me in the part that is mine.[34]

Regardless of these other themes, the restoration narrative was nonetheless vital in the early days after the fall of the Lekapenoi, and it had some traction beyond Constantine's death as even hostile future historians like John Skylitzes picked up on his good works. Whether the myth of origin and the narrative of paternal legacy was established in the reign of Constantine VII or before, it was certainly expanded and vigorously promoted under him. When the next two phases of rule by outsiders occurred after Romanos II's death, getting rid of or setting aside the child emperors was not something that either emperor was able to do. The patrimonial narrative of empire, though more difficult to trace in the sources, also seems to have bolstered the dynasty through its darker days, until the family line failed in the mid-eleventh century.

Notes

1 On the coups, see Symeon the Logothete, Reign of Constantine VII, ed. Wahlgren 2006: 340–343; Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 5.20–24; Theophanes Continuatus 6, Reign of Constantine VII, 1–3; Skylitzes, Reign of Constantine VII, 2.
2 *De adm. imp*. 13.
3 For a recent study on this subject, see Kaldellis 2015.
4 Dagron 1996.
5 Magdalino 1984; 1987; 1988a; 1988b; 2004.
6 Symeon the Logothete, Rise of Romanos I, 3 and 38, ed. Wahlgren 2006: 310 and 324–325.
7 Shepard 1995: 132.
8 Ševčenko 1992; Magdalino 2013.
9 *De cer.* 2, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 516.
10 Featherstone 2004b.
11 Leipzig University, *Rep.I, 17 (olim Mun. 28)*.

12 Bury 1907. Featherstone 2002; 2004a; 2004b; 2014.
13 *De cer*. 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 3–4.
14 *De cer.* 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 4.
15 *De cer*. 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 4–5.
16 *De cer*. 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 5.
17 *De cer.* 2, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 517.
18 *De cer.* 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 4.
19 *De cer.* 2, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 517.
20 Ed. Svoronos and Gounarides 1994: 118; trans. McGeer 2000: 71.
21 Leo VI, *Taktika*, Prologue 5, ed. and trans. Dennis 2014: 4–5.
22 *De cer.* 2, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 516.
23 Theoph. Cont. 6, Reign of Constantine VII, 14–22.
24 *De adm. imp*. 13.
25 *Vita Basilii* 2–4.
26 *Vita Basilii* 1.
27 *De adm. imp.*, Proemium, ed. trans. Moravcsik and Jenkins 1967: 44–45.
28 *De cer.* 1, Appendix, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 455.
29 *De cer.* 2.19, trans Moffatt and Tall 2012: 607; McCormick 1986: 161.
30 Skylitzes, Reign of Constantine VII, 6; *De cer.* 2.15; Nikephoros, *Short History* 9.
31 Ed. Ahrweiler 1967: 399; trans. McGeer 2003: 119–120.
32 Ivory plaque with Christ crowning Constantine VII, State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow), Inv. II-162.
33 On the rise of cults of military saints, see White 2013; also Oikonomidès 1995.
34 Ed. Vári 1908: 78–79; trans. McGeer 2003: 127–128. On Constantine VII's relationship with the army see also the comments in Chapter 9 by Trombley and Tougher in this volume.

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13

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL CONTESTATIONS IN POST-1204 BYZANTIUM

The orations of Niketas Choniates and the imperial court of Nicaea*

Nikolaos G. Chrissis

This chapter examines the ideological climate at the court of Nicaea in the early years after the Latin conquest of Constantinople, as revealed in the orations of Niketas Choniates. It also contributes to the discussion of Byzantine identity in the thirteenth century. Although both the events of 1204 and Niketas himself are well-known and do not need a lengthy introduction, it would be useful to start by setting the scene and briefly explaining why this examination is important in the context of the present volume on the Byzantine emperor.

The diversion of the Fourth Crusade from its original aim of reclaiming Jerusalem and its attack on the capital of Byzantium radically reshaped the political landscape in the area. The Byzantine empire was replaced by a patchwork of small states and lordships, both Greek and Latin. In this fragmented world, there was no shortage of claimants of the imperial title and authority. The Latin emperors at Constantinople attempted to present themselves as the legitimate successors of the pre-1204 Byzantine emperors. The same claim, however, was made by the rulers and propagandists of the three Byzantine rump states established after the conquest: Epiros in western Greece, Nicaea in Asia Minor, and Trebizond in the Pontus.[1]

The competition over the imperial title was certainly crucial for the legitimisation of these regimes and for boosting their standing; however, it went further than that, as it was intimately connected with the question of identities and allegiances. The main term of self-identification for the Byzantines was 'Roman' – but what was the content of this Romanness? For many scholars this is seen as inextricably linked with the imperial office and the imperial capital. For example, Gill Page has put it thus: 'the basic stuff of being Roman was loyalty to the emperor in Constantinople'.[2] More recently, Ioannis Stouraitis has spoken of 'Romanness as an identity that was primarily conditioned by allegiance or submission to the

political authority of the imperial office of Constantinople'.[3] On the other hand, Anthony Kaldellis has rejected the proposition that the Romans can be defined as 'subjects of the emperor', and has made the case for the empire as 'the nation-state of the Romans'; but even in his argument, where the imperial office is seen as a corollary of Romanness and not as its main source, the Romans are understood as a community tied to a particular polity, sharing not only cultural traits such as religion and language, but also common laws and institutions.[4] This polity effectively disappeared with the conquest of 1204.

It is therefore crucial to examine in detail the discourses which developed in the exceptional circumstances of the early thirteenth century: now that Constantinople had fallen to the Latins and the title of emperor was claimed by several rulers, how did the 'successor states' attempt to connect with the imperial past, what vision did they propose for the future, and how was the in-group (the Byzantines, the 'Roman people') conceptualized? Were answers to such questions obvious and uniform, or were there disputes as to the policies to be followed and differences in terms of Byzantine self-perception? In the following pages we will attempt to provide some answers to these questions, through the particular case-study of Nicaea and Niketas Choniates' orations.

The members of the dispersed Constantinopolitan elite were a living embodiment of continuity with the pre-1204 administration. An important figure in this group was Niketas Choniates (*c.*1155/56–1217), who had held key positions in the imperial court in the last quarter of the twelfth century, reaching the post of *logothetes ton sekreton* and *megas logothetes*. He was also an outstanding man of letters; his most famous work is, of course, his *History* (*Chronike Diegesis*, covering the years 1118–1207), the most important Byzantine source for this period, but his output also included theological writings, as well as panegyrics for emperors Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195) and Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) and other rhetorical works. He was an eye-witness to the sack of Constantinople, fleeing the city in its immediate aftermath. Like many other prominent members of the Byzantine elite, Niketas eventually found refuge in the state that had been founded by Laskaris in Asia Minor. His considerable talents, and particularly his rhetorical brilliance, could indeed be of use to the administration of the new state as it struggled to stake a claim to the imperial heritage of Constantinople. It is little surprise that he became a speech-writer for the aspiring emperor-in-exile.[5]

Niketas Choniates' orations

Niketas composed at least three rhetorical works for Theodore I Laskaris (1204–1222) in Nicaea: two Lenten orations (*selentia*), dated in 1207 and 1208 respectively, and a panegyric for Theodore Laskaris, celebrating his victory over the Seljuks in 1211.[6] Niketas also wrote two more orations in the period after 1204 which are of interest for the subject in hand: the first is an encomium for Theodore Laskaris, composed in 1206, before Niketas' arrival at Nicaea, a work most probably meant to gain Laskaris' favour and earn the author a place in the Nicaean court.[7]

The second piece is a monody for John Belissariotes, a high functionary in the imperial administration who was Niketas' close friend and brother-in-law.[8]

These orations, and particularly the first three we mentioned, are commonly considered as unambiguous statements of Nicaean ideology.[9] Niketas is seen, in this context, as the mouthpiece of the Laskarid regime, setting out its programme and legitimating Theodore's recently acquired imperial status. However, this is a rather simplified view of the texts which does not do them justice. Choniates composed his orations with great skill, incorporating in them a multi-layered message addressed both to his peers and to his ruler. A close reading of these texts, when set in the context of contemporary developments and compared with other writings of Choniates (especially his *Chronike Diegesis*), reveals internal dissensions and disputes in the Nicaean court. It will be argued here that Niketas is, in fact, offering advice and suggesting a political programme, in some respects at odds with the actual imperial policy of the time.

This would not be an unthinkable course of action: court rhetoric in Byzantium could also have an advisory function alongside its main celebratory one.[10] There are several examples, particularly from the Late Byzantine period, of orators who evidently took advantage of the public platform provided by imperial oratory to go beyond the role of ritual validation and dissemination of the regime's message, by commenting on current affairs and occasionally making suggestions (of varying degrees of subtlety) on the policy to be followed. Though not as straightforward as, for example, the oration addressed by Maximos Planoudes to Andronikos II Palaiologos and Michael IX Palaiologos approximately ninety years later, Choniates appears to have taken the opportunity to make some points of his own when addressing his sovereign.[11]

First, it is necessary to consider the official function and political message of these orations. To appreciate just how 'formal' the role of these orations was, it should be pointed out that the *selentia* were written in the first person as if delivered by the emperor himself.[12] Furthermore, the second *selention* was delivered in the build-up to Theodore's imperial coronation, which took place on Easter Sunday 1208.[13] In this context, the speech penned by Choniates was intended as a prelude to that ceremony and as an authoritative rehearsal of the regime's basic ideological tenets.

There is little doubt, therefore, that these orations largely gave voice to the ideology of the Nicaean state.[14] The latter identified itself as the only genuine continuator of the pre-1204 empire – an empire, however, which was now in exile. Its political programme was proclaimed to be the recovery of Constantinople and the full restoration of the imperial order. This was expressed through a series of biblical metaphors and parallels: the Byzantines were the Chosen People, and their emperor, Theodore Laskaris, was the New Zorobabel who would lead them back to the Promised Land from their Babylonian Captivity. Constantinople was their paradise, from which they had been expelled on account of their sins. Laskaris was also the New David, chosen by God to restore the fortunes of the kingdom.[15] He was the New Noah and Nicaea was the New Ark, a refuge for the Romans after their state was submerged in the cataclysm of the conquest.[16]

Another analogy was drawn from the New Testament: Theodore's actions at Nicaea were likened to Christ's resurrection.[17] The invocation of this and other Easter-related parallels was made more apposite and poignant by the timing and the context of the delivery of the two Lenten orations.

In this light, it is not unreasonable to see Choniates as nothing more than a hired pen for the Nicaean government. However, it is possible to discern Niketas' individual voice in the text, by paying close attention to three crucial parameters: first, the timing of the orations; second, the correlation between Nicaean policy and Niketas' fortunes and frustrations; and third, the consistency of ideas and themes with Choniates' other works, and especially with the last and most personal version of his *History*.[18]

The timing of Choniates' orations

While the content of the orations seems fully compatible with the ideology of the Nicaean state, not enough attention has been paid to their exact timing. This is especially crucial for the famous *selention* which is connected to Theodore's coronation and for the monody on Belissariotes. The former has been dated to early February 1208 and the latter to some point between late 1207 and early 1208;[19] that is, precisely within the two-year truce agreed between Nicaea and the Latin empire in the late spring or summer of 1207.[20] Theodore appears to have respected this truce, which was for the most part favourable to Nicaea (as it regained control over the important and much fought-over towns of Kyzikos and Nicomedia), while relations between the two states remained peaceful at least until the end of 1209.[21] In fact, in late 1207 or early 1208 Laskaris wrote a letter to pope Innocent III in which he effectively suggested a longer-term peace with defined areas of control for Nicaea and the Latin empire.[22] Yet exactly at this point in time, and in the run-up to Theodore's all-important coronation, the oration that Niketas prepared for the Nicaean ruler closed with a rousing call to throw 'the stone-hearted race of the Italians' into the sea and reclaim Constantinople and the other 'homelands'. The last paragraph is telling both in spirit and in content, as it is a plea to Christ to help crush the enemies and deliver His people from captivity.[23]

While the anti-Latin outlook and programme of liberation expressed in the orations that were delivered earlier (i.e., the encomium of 1206 and the *selention* of February 1207) corresponded fully to the needs of the Nicaean policy at the time, this was not quite the case with the *selention* of 1208. There are two possible explanations for the discrepancy. It can be seen either as an attempt by the regime to keep up the climate of a sustained war effort against the Latins, intended purely for internal consumption, or, alternatively, as an attempt by Niketas (and perhaps other like-minded courtiers) to advise against a policy of reconciliation with the Latins and in favour of a continuation of the fight against them. Although it is difficult to entirely rule out the former, I believe that the latter is the most likely case – with Niketas masterfully playing upon the expectations cultivated by the Nicaean government itself, but, as we will see in detail below, stressing elements

of his own choosing in the wording and structure of the *selention*. The most important and urgent message is reserved for the end for maximum impact, while the entire speech is less historicizing and much more evocative than Niketas' two previous orations for Theodore.

The funeral oration for John Belissariotes is also important because it corroborates our argument in two ways: first, it proves that the *selention* of 1208 was not an isolated case and, second, it indicates that Choniates actually shared the ideas expressed in that speech at the time, and that he was not, then, simply reproducing the official line. The monody is a much more personal piece, where Niketas laments the loss of a close friend. Nevertheless, the orator returns twice to the subject of Constantinople, denouncing the Latin invaders (against whom Niketas uses some of his most striking alliterations: *δυσμενὴς πληθὺς δυσμικὴ* [hostile western host]; *τὸ μιξοβάρβαρον ἐκεῖνο καὶ φιλόχρυσον πλέον ἤπερ φιλόχριστον [. . .] στράτευμα* [that mixed-barbarian and gold-loving rather than Christ-loving army]) and, most importantly, making a direct call for the city's liberation: 'who will save you [. . .] who will gather your children from the four winds? Who will be your liberator Moses or Zorobabel leading [us] back to you?'[24] Such words were bound to make an impression on an audience that included high dignitaries, the peers of Belissariotes and Choniates. It is unlikely that Niketas was not conscious of the implications. This was as much a political statement as the expression of a personal wish. We know that the oration was delivered shortly after Belissariotes' death ('during the days of mourning' as Choniates attests himself),[25] at the very time when the emperor had agreed to the truce with the Latin empire and was advocating a more stable peace through his aforementioned contact with the papacy. The potential impact of Choniates' words is very different if we consider that they were spoken in front of an audience aware of, and possibly ambivalent towards, Theodore's recent overtures to the Latins.

Nicaean policy and Choniates' role in the 1210s

The above points are further reinforced when we examine more closely how Niketas' fortunes fared in correlation with Nicaea's evolving foreign policy. We should first note that only one oration by Niketas survives after this period, namely the one delivered in 1211. Even though the main theme of this oration was the victory against the Seljuks, Choniates once again attempted to turn the focus onto a war of recovery and liberation against the Latins. After expressing the wish that '[the sign of the cross] will place under your [Theodore's] feet all the enemies and foes, both eastern and western',[26] Niketas closed his speech by addressing the emperor as follows:

> and may you terrify and defeat not only the barbarians in the east, but also the foreign-tongued and mixed-up race that invaded us from the west; and may you be yourself the longed-for liberator of the famous city of Constantine and the Zorobabel who leads back [his people from captivity].[27]

This message was appropriate at that time given that Nicaea was at war with both the Seljuks and the Latins – but not for long, as circumstances changed yet again. A new truce was concluded between Nicaea and the Latin empire around 1213–1214, which delineated their respective territories and which was not to be broken for the remainder of Theodore's life.[28] In fact, Laskaris seems to have been intent on upgrading his relations with the Latins from that point on, and in 1219 he married Mary of Courtenay, daughter of the Latin empress Yolanda. Theodore's 'Latinizing' policy was met with criticism on the Byzantine side, both within and outside the borders of Nicaea.[29]

After *c.* 1213/1214, when the rapprochement between Nicaea and the Latin empire became more solid, Niketas Choniates no longer appeared to play an active role at the court. He wrote no more orations in this period (or at least none has survived). On the contrary, his bitterness and disillusionment grew and are particularly discernible in the last draft of his *History*, which he set out to compose around that time (1214/1215–1217).[30] In his last recension, Niketas deleted some positive characterizations that he had made earlier regarding Theodore Laskaris, specifically referring to his courageous stance against the Latins, while he dismissed the Nicaean ruler unceremoniously alongside the other Byzantine leaders who chose infighting over common resistance after 1204.[31] Evidence of his dissociation with the regime at this point is also the fact that, in the title of the last draft of his *History*, Niketas omitted all his court offices by which he identified himself in the earlier versions.[32]

Prominent ideas and common themes in Choniates' works after 1204

This brings us to the third point, namely the prominent common themes in Choniates' works, which reveal his personal outlook and also relate to the wider issues of ideology and identity after 1204. Due to constraints of space, I will offer here only an overview of my research and some examples pertaining to these points.[33]

Luckily, we have a rather solid benchmark regarding Niketas' own point of view. This is provided by the final version of his *History* which, unlike the previous ones, is a clearly personal undertaking, lacking any intention to flatter and praise the rulers. It is an effort to make sense of the catastrophe that engulfed the empire in 1204 and a scathing indictment of the Byzantine establishment, particularly those who governed the empire in the last years before the fall.[34] My main point here is that, although the *tone* is different between Niketas' orations and his *History*, the *ideas* expressed in them are common. The resentment and frustration evident in the last version of the *Chronike Diegesis* betray the disappointment of the author's hopes – but the themes were already present several years earlier in his rhetorical works, expressed in more optimistic but equally pressing terms.

The ideal for Choniates after 1204 is Byzantine unity despite political fragmentation. This is both explicitly stated and emphasised through a series of particular themes. Let us take for example the *selention* of 1208. While parallelisms and

allusions to Davidic kingship were commonplace in imperial encomia,[35] Niketas chose an aspect of David's rule which, to my knowledge, was not used by other orators: David was first made king over the tribe of Judah, and then eventually over the whole of Israel. Likewise, Laskaris, a New David, has been raised by God to lead a portion of the Romans at present, but he will eventually gather under him the entirety of New Israel.[36] This was complemented by another biblical theme, the allegory of the Good Shepherd. It was said that, after the recovery of Constantinople,

> the rest of the flock, those who up to now are not of this sheepfold, will, when they listen to the voice of my imperial Highness, be won over [and return] to the authority that was there previously, as in a single fold. And there will be one flock, one shepherd.[37]

The fact that this is how the all-important *selention* of 1208 ends leaves no doubt about the centrality of this message to the programme of the Nicaean emperor as perceived and expressed by Choniates.[38] It should be noted, however, that the same message, and even the same imagery of David uniting the tribes of Israel and the Good Shepherd bringing the lost sheep back to the fold, had already been used in the encomium composed in 1206, before Choniates even set foot in Nicaea.[39]

Another important theme in Niketas' orations is Theodore's motivation for assuming command: he did this out of a desire for common freedom and not because of a love of rule.[40] Seen in the context of contemporary circumstances and Niketas' other writings, it becomes evident that this represents a conviction on the part of the author, going beyond the *topos* of the ruler's humility expected in an imperial panegyric.

The same themes – that is, unity and freedom versus infighting and petty ambition – are also present in the *Chronike Diegesis*. They are, in fact, dominant in Choniates' thought-world after 1204. In a famous passage added to the last version of the *History*, Niketas denounced the behaviour of the remaining Byzantine leaders after 1204 who chose to fight each other instead of jointly facing the common enemy. After enumerating those still in control of lands in both west and east (Leo Sgouros, Leo Chamaretos, Michael Doukas, Theodore Laskaris, Manuel Maurozomes, David and Alexios Komnenos, and others), Niketas goes on to state:

> These rulers should have united in their efforts and taken precautions to preserve their portion of the fatherland from further afflictions and to recover the conquered cities, but they lost control of themselves in their mad thirst for fame and desire to be named tyrants, and so they took up arms against one another. Because of the dissensions and the divisions among themselves, the Romans at the first assault awarded the enemy the scepter and their submission, or, as one might say, the victor's prize of armor and the trophy of war.[41]

Niketas had made the exact same point in his first encomium to Theodore Laskaris in 1206 (excepting, of course, the honorand from such criticism), when he referred to the time

> when our nobles were scattered in various places and they were all running for their lives; and some went away, while others stayed in the fatherland but did not defend her (*τῶν δὲ μεινάντων μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς πατρίδος, οὐκ ἐπαμυνάντων δὲ τῇ πατρίδι*) – instead, they trampled further upon her and brought shame upon themselves, as they willingly succumbed to the conquering nations and basely gave away their freedom [in exchange] for a piece of bread and a cup of wine.[42]

These passages demonstrate that the orations and the *History* of Choniates are a mirror image of each other: where the former express hope, the latter is replete with disappointment. But the ideal state of affairs envisaged by the author (and, conversely, the core problem as he identified it) is essentially the same.

Niketas Choniates and Byzantine identity

We conclude with a few observations relating to identity as revealed in the writings of Niketas Choniates. The passages quoted above encapsulate the main points in Niketas' post-1204 outlook: the Romans constitute a single group, regardless of who is leading them politically; the various lords ought to have put up a common fight (but they failed to); there is a 'fatherland', only parts of which remain free.[43]

Those are elements of what can be called proto-nationalism.[44] Choniates perceives his compatriots as a 'people', for which he commonly uses an 'ethnic' terminology referring to *γένος* or *φύλον*. Most importantly, this identification of the in-group forms the basis for the proposed political action.[45] Laskaris is praised for his willingness 'to risk [yourself] for the common freedom [. . .] for the sake of the people of your own stock and race' (*ὑπὲρ τῶν ὁμογενῶν καὶ συμφύλων σοι*).[46] He is urged to liberate Constantinople ('the common homeland of the Romans') and all the homelands from which the Byzantines were driven out.[47] The narrative is not only one of common effort, but also one of common suffering: in the *History* Niketas speaks of the 'utter destruction and complete annihilation of the nation of the Romans' (*πανώλειά τε καὶ παντελὴς ἐξολόθρευσις τῷ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἔθνει*).[48] It is also crucial that a different treatment is reserved for opponents perceived to be 'of the same stock' and for 'foreign invaders': in the first encomium to Laskaris, the defeated soldiers of Trebizond are welcomed back to the fold; the Latins, on the other hand, are to be driven into the sea.

Indeed, Niketas' oration of 1206 celebrates equally Laskaris' resistance against the Latins and his victory over David Komnenos, brother of the ruler of Trebizond Alexios I, at Bithynia and Paphlagonia during the previous year.[49] A significant part of the oration is dedicated to praising Theodore for winning

over the allegiance of the soldiers of Trebizond. Niketas presents Laskaris as 'the shepherd who is calling back the flock [that is, the people of Trebizond], which is wandering on mountains and in ravines'. Crucially, Niketas stresses that Theodore accepted their 'return' eagerly, instead of punishing them for not heeding his calls, and that he did so precisely because they were part of his own people, over whom he had been appointed to rule:

> You have shown mercy [to them], as your allotted portion, both ancient and powerful, and a crucial part – which ought not to be rejected – of the people under your authority; you do not look at how they became apostates, but you are glad that they [eventually] recognised their sovereign and understood the fraud to which they had previously given themselves.[50]

Their identification as members of the flock, therefore, is not the result of their subjection to the emperor's rule, but rather the opposite: because they are considered to be Romans too, they ought to be subject to the emperor. It is the emperor's task to bring them back to the political community of the Roman people.

The orations thus reveal the terms in which some Byzantines perceived themselves in the chaotic and novel circumstances after 1204. Byzantine identity was not circumscribed by the narrow political boundaries under the control of any one leader claiming to be the heir of the emperors of Constantinople. The fact that the message included in the orations of late 1207 and early 1208 ran essentially counter to Laskarid policy towards the Latin empire at the time hints at dissentions within the court and, in my view, should be seen as an effort on the part of Choniates to advocate a different approach, one of relentless irredentism. The orator had to tread a fine line: although these orations stayed generally within the bounds of the regime's own self-representation, Choniates seems to have pushed for a more aggressive policy than Theodore's government was willing to follow at that point. Niketas' strongly worded frustration in the final version of his *History* indicates that those were personally held beliefs and not simply the dissemination of the official Nicaean line. At the same time, although Choniates might have been a pioneer in expressing this vision of 'national' liberation so forcefully and so explicitly, the latter was clearly expected to resonate with his peers. Otherwise, it would hardly have been given such a prominent place in texts delivered on key occasions before Laskaris and the Nicaean court.

There are certainly affinities between the views expressed by Choniates and those found in other sources of the period. Niketas' brother, Michael, also referred to *homophyloi* and *homogeneis* residing across the former imperial lands, whether under Latin or Byzantine control, and expressed his support to both rulers of Epiros and Nicaea in their efforts for the liberty of the Romans.[51] Patriarch Michael Autoreianos in Nicaea and the archbishop of Ochrid, Demetrios Chomatianos, in Epiros also made appeals to their Byzantine audience to fight the Latins, among other things, for the honour and liberty of their 'genos' and for their 'homeland'.[52] Autoreianos, in his famous synodic letter

to all the people and soldiers of Nicaea, referred to a fight 'for the freedom and glory of our race' (*ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους καὶ εὐδοξίας*) while also making a call for Roman unity, guaranteed by the divinely-appointed emperor, Theodore Laskaris.[53] The main difference is that, in the patriarch's letter, unity is seen through the lens of imperial authority, whereas in Choniates' work the emphasis is on the *Roman people* rather than on the *imperial crown* as the fundamental focus of allegiance. Therefore, the texts examined here afford us a glimpse into the ideological ferment at the heart of the Byzantine establishment in the tumultuous early years after the Latin conquest.

Notes

* Research for this chapter was carried out in the context of the project: 'Worlds Apart? Identity and Otherness in Late Byzantine Perceptions of the West' (SH6–1345). The research project was implemented within the framework of the Action 'Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers' of the Operational Program 'Education and Lifelong Learning' (Action's Beneficiary: General Secretariat for Research and Technology), and was co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State. I would like to thank Shaun Tougher, Anthony Kaldellis, and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments and suggestions.

1 See, for example, Stavridou-Zafraka 1991; Eastmond 2004; Angelov 2005; van Tricht 2011: 61–101.

2 Page 2008 : 46–52, passim (quotation at 47).

3 Stouraitis 2014: 214.

4 Kaldellis 2007: 51.

5 Editions of Niketas' works: van Dieten 1975 (hereafter cited as *Historia*) and van Dieten 1973 (hereafter cited as *Orationes*). A re-edition of the text of the *History*, with some corrections and an Italian translation in Kazhdan, van Dieten, Maisano and Pontani 1994–2014; English translation by Magoulias 1984. There is a German translation of the orations and letters by Grabler 1966. For Niketas' life and works, see in general van Dieten 1971, Harris 2000 and 2001, Simpson and Efthymiadis, eds. 2009, Simpson 2013. An overview of earlier literature in Simpson 2009: 14–16.

6 *Orationes* 17 (176–185), 13 (120–128) and 16 (170–175) respectively.

7 *Orationes* 14 (129–147). For the dating of the oration, see van Dieten 1971: 59, 146–152. After escaping the sack of Constantinople, Choniates found refuge in Selymbria (April 1204–June 1206), before briefly returning to Constantinople for a few months (July 1206–December 1206); from there he moved to Nicaea at the end of 1206 or the beginning of 1207: van Dieten 1971: 44–47; Simpson 2006: 194.

8 *Orationes* 15 (147–189).

9 Gardner 1912: 68–71; Ahrweiler 1975: 111 (where the *selention* is described as the 'political and ideological charter of the new empire'); Stavridou-Zafraka 1991: 92–106 (esp. 99, 108); Angelov 2005: 297–299, 303; Angelov 2007: 99–101, 106, 164; Giarenis 2008: 79–81, 95, 289–330 (esp. 290–291, 311–314, 324–325; Giarenis refers to the *selention* as a 'basic programmatic declaration' of the Nicaean emperor).

10 See also the reflections by John Vanderspoel in this volume.

11 On the advisory role of oratory in the Late Byzantine era, see Angelov 2003; Angelov 2007: 62–64, 161–180; Toth 2007: 442–443. Niketas Choniates himself had subtly tried to advise against Isaac II's policy towards the Third Crusade and to make Isaac reconsider his relations with Saladin, in an oration delivered in the emperor's presence (or at any rate in the court) back in 1190 – as argued by Angelov 2006: 55–65.

12 The term *silention* or *selention* initially referred to a solemn gathering of the higher dignitaries of state. However, from as early as the tenth/eleventh centuries it was also used to denote the customary speech on fasting delivered to the senate by the emperor (often ghost-written), on the first Sunday of Lent: see Christophilopulu 1951: 82–83; Stavridou-Zafraka 1991: 99 (with bibliography).

13 For the dating of the oration see van Dieten 1971: 59, 141–142. For the dating of Theodore's acclamation and coronation, see Macrides 2007: 83–84; Giarenis 2008: 46–49.

14 For the ideology of the Nicaean state, see Ahrweiler 1975: 101–114; Stavridou-Zafraka 1991: 92–116; Angelov 2005; Angelov 2007: 98–101; Giarenis 2008: 289–340.

15 See e.g. *Orationes*: 128.9–33, 139.1–12, 147.1–15, 160.6–21, 174.12–175.34.

16 The parallelism is made in Sergios' *didaskalia* (Polemis 1993: 67–68, 72.35–41), in one of Mesarites' letters (Heisenberg 1973, II.ii: 32.5–7), and in a letter of Michael Choniates (Kolovou 2001: no. 94.26–30); Giarenis 2008: 291–292.

17 For the resurrection theme, see Giarenis 2008: 313–316.

18 The versions of Choniates' *History*, as can be discerned from the surviving manuscripts, are laid out by van Dieten in the introduction of his edition (*Historia*: xix–ci, esp. lvi–lvii and xciii–ci), and discussed in detail by Simpson 2006; Simpson 2013: 68–124.

19 See van Dieten 1971: 59, 141–142, 159.

20 Giarenis 2008: 100–101. According to the information provided by Geoffrey of Villehardouin (Faral 1961: pars. 487–490), the truce was agreed between 15 April and 24 June 1207.

21 Conflict between the two sides began again only after Henry's alliance with the Seljuk sultan Kai-Khusraw and the latter's aggression against Nicaea in 1210–1211. Besides, the Latin emperor was busy in the meantime dealing with the Lombard revolt in Greece. See, for example, Gardner 1912: 78–84; Setton 1976–84, vol. 1: 27–29; Wolff 1969: 206–208; Giarenis 2008: 100–102.

22 The pope's response, dated 17 March 1208, summarizes the contents of Theodore's letter, which has not survived: Hageneder *et al.*, eds. 1964–, vol. 11: no. 44 (47). While denouncing the Latin outrages against Byzantium, Laskaris evidently suggested a lasting settlement between the Latin empire and Nicaea. Theodore even proposed common Byzantine-Latin action against the 'Ishmaelites'.

23 *Orationes*: 128.9–33: *εἰ τοίνυν οὕτω πολιτευόμεθα, ἐροῦμεν ἂν τῷ ὄρει τούτο· 'ἄρθητι και βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν'* [Mark 11:23], *τῷ λιθοκαρδίῳ γένει τῶν Ἰταλῶν [. . .] · καὶ τῶν πατρίδων αὖθις λαβώμεθα, ὧν ἁμαρτόντες ἀπεσφαιρίσθημεν*.

24 References to Constantinople and the Latins in the monody at *Orationes*: 149–150 and 159–161 (quotation at 160.17–20): *τίς σώσει σε [. . .]; τίς ἐκ τῶν τεττάρων ἀνέμων ἐπισυναγάγῃ τὰ τέκνα σου; τίς ἐπισταίη σοι Μωσῆς ἐλευθερωτὴς ἢ Ζοροβάβελ ἐπανάγων ὀφθείη σοι*.

25 The information on the time of the delivery is given in a letter of Choniates to Theodore Eirenikos: *Orationes*: 213.24–214.1. Cf. van Dieten 1971: 59, 159.

26 *Orationes*: 175.8–10: *τοῦτο τοῖς σοῖς ποσὶν ὑποθήσει πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον, ὅσος ἑῷος, ὅσος ἑσπέριος*.

27 *Orationes:* 175.30–34: *καὶ φοβῶν καὶ νικῶν οὐ μόνον τὸ πρὸς ἕω βάρβαρον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ δυσμόθεν ἐπεισφρῆσαν ἡμῖν πολυσπερὲς καὶ ἀλλόγλωτον γένος· καὶ εἴης αὐτὸς ὁ προσδοκώμενος ἐλευθερωτὴς τῆς λογίμης πόλεως Κωνσταντίνου καὶ ὁ ἐπανάγων Ζοροβάβελ*.

28 For the relations between Nicaea and the Seljuks in this period, see Giarenis 2008: 59–89, and Korobeinikov 2014: 111–169; A discussion of the truce in Giarenis 2008: 107–111, who argues that Nicaea effectively became a 'hostage' to the Latin empire after the treaty, as the terms divided its territories in two separate parts, difficult to communicate with each other; cf. Angold 1975a: 111–112. Giarenis 2008: 109, dates

a preliminary truce to 1212 and a more permanent peace signed in 1214; van Tricht 2001: 413–417, 221–227, has dated the truce to 1213, while earlier literature generally accepted 1214 (e.g. Lock 1995: 55–56); cf. Macrides 2007: 152 n.12.

29 Theodore's marriage was denounced by the metropolitan of Naupaktos, John Apokaukos (see Vasilievsky 1896: 265–267, no. 15), while the later plan (*c*. 1221) for a marriage between Theodore's daughter, Eudokia, and the new Latin emperor, Robert of Courtenay, was strongly resisted by patriarch Manuel I Sarantenos: Giarenis 2008: 111–116 and 148–149. For the marriage diplomacy between Nicaea and the Latin empire, see also Angold 2011: 50–54. The 'western' turn of Theodore's policy was also evident in the five-year commercial treaty with the Venetians granting them trading privileges in Nicaean territories, which was signed in August 1219, and in the plan for a Byzantine delegation to be sent to the papacy in 1220 (even though these developments took place after Niketas' death and therefore are not central to the argument made here): see Nicol 1988: 163–166; Stavridou-Zafraka 1991: 57–58; Giarenis 2008: 132–138. The treaty with the Venetians in Tafel and Thomas 1856–57, vol. 2: 205–207; commentary in Hendrickx 2004. For the call to the clergy of Epiros to participate in a synod that would send an embassy to Rome (and the Epirote reactions), see Nicol 1957: 86–87.

30 For the dating of the revision, see Simpson 2006: 211–213, 220; Simpson 2013: 76–77. Niketas' deep dissatisfaction with his circumstances in Nicaea is reflected in the last part of his revised *History* (*Historia*: 644–645) as well as in several of his surviving letters (nos. 2–5, 7, 11 in *Orationes*: 202–208, 209–211, 216–217).

31 Niketas famously described the 'polyarchy' in the east as 'a three-headed monster' comprising Theodore Laskaris, Manuel Maurozomes and David Komnenos of Pontus: *Historia*: 625–626. See also below for Niketas' criticism of the inefficient and self-seeking lords who failed to face the Latins.

32 See Simpson 2006: 217.

33 As already noted above, this chapter sprang from my postdoctoral research project on Late Byzantine identity. These points are addressed in greater detail in the monograph which is currently under preparation.

34 See Simpson 2006: 216–220; Simpson 2013: 76–77, 80–103; Harris 2000 and 2001.

35 Angelov 2007: 90, 127–130; Treitinger 1938: 81, 129–135. For the parallelism between the emperor and David in art, see Grabar 1936: 95–97; Eastmond 2004: 105, 145–146. For the earlier period, see Rapp 2010.

36 *Orationes*: 127.18–31: *ὁ δ' ἐντελὴς μισθαποδότης Θεὸς [. . .] τὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ καλοῦ ζῆλον τῆς βασιλείας μου προσδεξάμενος, εἰς τὴν βασίλειον ταύτην ἀνηρπάκει περιωπὴν Δαυίδειον τὸ χρῖσμα καὶ τὴν ἀρχαιρεσίαν ταὐτίζουσαν δωρησάμενος· ὡς ἐκεῖνος τῆς Ἰούδα πρώτως ἐπέβη φυλῆς, εἶτα καὶ τοῦ παντὸς Ἰσραήλ, καὶ ἡ βασιλεία μου ἐς δεῦρο τῶν πρὸς ἀκτῖνα Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὑπεριζάνουσα πόλεων πέποιθεν ὡς ὁ πρωτότοκον θέμενος τὸν Δαυίδ, ὑψηλὸν παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι τῆς γῆς, καὶ προσεπιδοὺς ὕστερον ἐκείνῳ τὴν τῶν ἑτέρων φυλῶν κληρούχησιν καὶ τῆς Σιὼν τὴν κατάσχεσιν, αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ τῆς βασιλείας μου κατευθύνων διαβήματά τε καὶ διαβούλια πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων ἐξουσίαν χαρίσαιτο [. . .].*

37 *Orationes*: 128.24–33: *εἰ δὲ καὶ τὰ εἰσιτήρια ἑορτάσομεν ἧς ἐκπεπτώκειμεν πόλεως [. . .], εἴη ἂν τοῦτο τῶν σῶν θαυμασίων ἔργων θαυμασιώτερον καὶ τῶν πώποτε τελεσθέντων ἐξαισίων ἐξαισιώτερον. ὅτε καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ θρέμματα τῆς φωνῆς ἀκηκοότα τῆς βασιλείας μου ὡς εἰς μάνδραν μίαν τὴν προτέραν ἀρχὴν ἀλισθήσονται, ἃ τῷ τέως οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης· καὶ γενήσεται μία ποίμνη, εἷς ποιμήν [. . .]*. Cf. John 10:16: *ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, καὶ γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκουσί με τὰ ἐμά, [. . .] καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης· κἀκεῖνα δεῖ με ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούσουσιν, καὶ γενήσονται μία ποίμνη, εἷς ποιμήν*.

38 Cf. Giarenis 2008: 324–326.

39 See *Orationes*: 134.15–20 (*ἐκεῖνα τὰ Δαυιτικά σοι προσφυῶς ὑποψήλαντες [. . .] ἐς βασιλέα χρίουσιν αὐτοκράτορα ὡς τὸν ἐξ Ἰεσσαὶ ἡ μέν Ἰούδα φυλὴ πρότερον, ὁ δ' ἅπας*

Ἰσραὴλ ὕστερον) and 143.7–9 (*ἤχησα τὸ ἀνακλητικὸν ὡς ἐπὶ ποιμνίῳ ποιμὴν εἰς ὄρη πλανωμένῳ καὶ ἀνομίας καὶ βάραθρα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπεστράφητε τῶν κηρυγμάτων ὡς τῶν συριγμάτων τὰ τῶν ζῴων βληχώμενα*).

40 See, for example, *Orationes*: 127.1–11: *ἃ δὴ πάντα συνηνέχθη τε καὶ κατεπράχθη τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου, οὐχ ἵνα κέρδος καρπώσωμαι ἴδιον (οὐχ οὕτως ἐγὼ πλέον φίλαρχος ἤπερ φιλόπατρις) ἀλλ' ἵνα τῶν ἑῴων ἀποσοβήσαιμι πόλεων τὸ κατὰ πᾶσαν εὐπέτειαν τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ὑπεισιὸν ἐπικράτειαν ὅσα καὶ νέφος ἀκρίδων καὶ κεῖρον ταύτην καὶ ληιζόμενον ἐπιζεφύριον ἐπάρατον σύνταγμα*; and 131.27–132.4: *οὐ ζητῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ, [. . .] οὐδ' ὅπως περιβαλῇ τὴν πορφυρίδα καὶ ὑποδύσῃ τὸ ἐξέρυθρον πέδιλον, ἀλλ' ἵνα τὸ κηρεσιφόρον βάρβαρον ἀπελάσειας καὶ τῇ πατρίδι βοηθήσῃς κακῶς πασχούσῃ καὶ στεγούσῃ τὰ πάντων τῶν δεινῶν δυσαχθέστερα*.

41 *Historia*: 639.77–83; trans. Magoulias 1984: 351. Cf. similar views and comments in *Historia*: 625–626, 637–639, 561.19–22, 644.54–61.

42 *Orationes*: 130.34–131.3.

43 Cf. *Orationes*: 121.13–15, 126.13–19, 143–144, 146.6–16; *Historia*: 602–604, 625, 637.25–40.

44 Although applying such terms to the pre-modern world is fraught with danger, there have been several sober discussions of Nicaean 'patriotism': Irmscher 1970 and 1972; Angold 1975b. An excellent discussion of the wider question of 'nationalism' in the Byzantine empire is by Magdalino 1991. Cf. Angelov 2005: 299–303, who speaks of 'the emergence of elements of Hellenic proto-nationalism' in Nicaea. For recent discussions of Byzantine identity see notes 2–4 above.

45 See, for example, the striking condemnation of Manuel Maurozomes for allying with the Seljuks against his compatriots (and note also the reference to language as another element of group identification). *Orationes*: 136.35–137.7: 'he [Maurozomes] who is connected to us by race, but in his thoughts he is a foreigner and someone who is and has proven himself an immoderate enemy of his own fatherland [. . .]; and along with Persian [i.e. Turkish] forces he, who only knows how to be brave against his own people, has ravaged those of the same language who were not of one mind with him, as if they were of a foreign race' (*ὁ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ γένος ἡμῖν συναπτόμενος, ταῖς δὲ γνώμαις ἀλλοεθνὴς καὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πατρίδος ἀκρατὴς πολέμιος καὶ ὢν καὶ δεικνύμενος [. . .] καὶ μετὰ δυνάμεων Περσικῶν ἐπιὼν ὁ κατὰ μόνων τῶν οἰκείων εἰδὼς ἀνδρίζεσθαι ἔκειρε τὸ μὴ συμφρονοῦν ὁμόγλωττον ὡς ἀλλόφυλον*). See also *Orationes*: 126.13–19; *Historia*: 618.3–4, 634.87, 625.24–39, etc. Regarding the emphasis on 'race', cf. the observation by Shawcross 2011: 31.

46 *Orationes*: 132.4–6: *ηὔξω κατὰ τὸν ἐκ Ταρσοῦ θεοκήρυκα τῆς κοινῆς προκινδυνεύων ἐλευθερίας καὶ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ὑπὲρ τῶν ὁμογενῶν καὶ συμφύλων σοι*. This is an allusion to Romans 9:3 (*ηὐχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα*), but the adaptation of terminology is notable: the 'brothers and relatives of the flesh' of the original is replaced by 'those of the same *genos* and *phylon*'.

47 See *Orationes*: 147.16–17 (*Ταῦτα ἡ γαλοῦχός σοι πόλις καὶ κοινὴ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πατρὶς οἰμώζουσα καὶ κοπτομένη φησί, βασιλεῦ*) and 128.9–33 (*εἰ τοίνυν οὕτω πολιτευόμεθα [. . .] τῶν πατρίδων αὖθις λαβώμεθα, ὧν ἁμαρτόντες ἀπεσφαιρίσθημεν*). For the use of the term *patris* in the wider sense of 'fatherland' (rather than 'hometown'), see also *Orationes*: 130.36, 132.3, 137.1, 160.1, 184.31; *Historia*: 601.72, 637.35.

48 *Historia*: 635, *apparatus criticus*, l. 16; cf. *Historia*: 634.87 (*ἐμοῖς τε καὶ τῶν φυλετῶν δυσπραγήμασι*).

49 For the conflict between Nicaea and Trebizond in 1205–1206, see Giarenis 2008: 167–173.

50 *Orationes*: 142–144 (quotations at 143.7–8 and 143.29–33).

51 See e.g. Kolovou 2001: nos. 94, 95, 100, 102, 126, 129, 134, 138, 140, 152, 153, 164, 165, 171.

52 Oikonomidès 1967: 117–118; Prinzing 2002: 88–90, 363–367; cf. Shawcross 2014: 65–66.
53 Oikonomidès 1967: 117.9–10, 118.37–42.

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14

THE EMPEROR IN THE *HISTORY* OF JOHN VI KANTAKOUZENOS (1347–1354)

Savvas Kyriakidis

This chapter examines the portrayal of the imperial office in the *History* of the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, which is one of the most important sources for the study of fourteenth-century Byzantium. The reliability of Kantakouzenos cannot stand up to scrutiny. His purpose was not to provide an accurate record of the events of the period he describes, but to explain his actions in the conflicts between aristocratic cliques and the civil wars which devastated Byzantium in the first half of the fourteenth century. Writing in the 1360s Kantakouzenos knew that he was one of the very few people who had inside knowledge of the events he reports and most of his assertions would be unopposed.[1] Often he distorts and fabricates lengthy deliberations, private discussions and facts to promote his personal agenda. Nevertheless, the value of his *History* is obvious. It is the only surviving history compiled by a Roman emperor and it is based on the testimony of an eyewitness present in the centre of events.

A large part of Kantakouzenos' narrative is formed by speeches, letters, documents and descriptions of imperial ceremonies. Many of these are distorted, inflated and fabricated. Nonetheless, they provide most of the information regarding Kantakouzenos' views about the function of the imperial office, its ceremonial role and the virtues the emperor is supposed to possess. In his account of the events following his victory in the civil war of 1341–1347, which was fought between his clan and supporters and the regency of John V Palaiologos (1341–1391), Kantakouzenos included two letters which are attributed to the clergyman Bartholomew of Rome. He was a canon of Negroponte and was sent by Humbert II the dauphin of Viennois as an envoy to the widow of Andronikos III, Anna of Savoy, to commence discussions regarding Church Union. When Bartholomew arrived in Constantinople, he found Kantakouzenos on the throne. Kantakouzenos, who had met Bartholomew in 1341 in Didymoteichon, claims that he conversed with the western envoy who was impressed by the prudence of the new emperor.[2] Through these letters Kantakouzenos connects himself to important elements of imperial ideology.

The first of Bartholomew's letters is addressed to the pope of Avignon, Clemens VI. It identifies Kantakouzenos as a champion of peace and compares

him to the biblical king Solomon. Kantakouzenos follows the example of Christ and was granted Constantinople and the throne by God. He is portrayed as a philanthropic emperor who pardoned his enemies and captured the Byzantine capital after achieving a victory without shedding Christian blood. The letter concludes with the observation that Kantakouzenos is ready to defend Christendom against the enemies of the cross.[3] The second of Bartholomew's letters was addressed to Humbert. By quoting passages from the Old Testament, the author emphasises the sacred character of the imperial office and repeats that Kantakouzenos was granted the throne by God. Bartholomew remarks that whoever opposes the emperor's authority resists the authority of God's apostle. Kantakouzenos shares the goodness (*χρηστότης*) of Constantine the Great and the mercifulness (*φιλάνθρωπον*) of Octavian Augustus. His piety is equal or even superior to that of the emperor Theodosius. The emperor's philanthropy (*φιλανθρωπότης*) and calmness (*ἐπιείκεια*) are praised. Although many individuals offended the emperor and should have faced death for their crimes, the emperor harmed no one. The letter concludes with the comment that Kantakouzenos' rule will bring peace to the Christians and will thwart the advance of the Ismaelites.[4]

Although Kantakouzenos claims that he reproduces the entire text of Bartholomew's letters, it is unknown whether they were sent to their recipients in the form they are found in the *History*. Nevertheless, they attribute to Kantakouzenos traditional virtues of the imperial office and emphasise its sacredness. The emperor is depicted as an imitator of Christ and is applauded for his philanthropy towards his subjects and enemies. He is also compared to biblical and classical figures. This is in-line with the suggestion of the fourteenth-century author Joseph the Philosopher who writes that orators should use as their sources, besides classical texts, the Old Testament and particularly the Books of Kings.[5] By likening himself to the founder of Constantinople and to the first Roman emperor, Constantine and Octavian, Kantakouzenos legitimises his rule and presents it as a period of restoration of the Byzantine state. This was not something new. Comparisons with biblical figures appear frequently in Byzantine imperial propaganda and a number of emperors compared themselves to Constantine to legitimise their position on the throne.[6]

Legitimacy is not the only reason why Kantakouzenos reproduced the aforementioned letters. They include allusions to contemporary political developments and responses to criticism directed against Kantakouzenos. The reference to the emperor's entrance to Constantinople without spilling Christian blood is a response to the accusation that in the civil war of 1341–1347 Kantakouzenos relied heavily on the support of Turkish troops, who devastated Byzantine possessions and paved the way for the conquest of the European territories of the empire. This criticism is reflected in Kantakouzenos who blames his enemies for being the first to employ Turkish mercenaries and forcing him to seek Turkish military aid.[7] Kantakouzenos' portrayal as a philanthropic emperor, who did not harm his enemies, is an allusion to the fact that he did not seek the physical elimination of his enemies after his victory in 1347. Kantakouzenos did not

depose John V and throughout his account he portrays himself as a defender of the hereditary rights of the Palaiologoi to the throne.[8] To emphasise his claim Kantakouzenos writes that many of his supporters protested against his leniency towards the defeated party.[9] Similarly, to promote his profile as a philanthropic ruler Kantakouzenos describes how he pardoned his main enemy in the civil war, the patriarch John Kalekas. According to Kantakouzenos, Kalekas, who expected to be put to death and not to be pardoned, expressed his gratitude to the emperor and acknowledged his merciful nature and kindness. Kantakouzenos points out that Kalekas' deposition was strictly the result of dogmatic disputes and had nothing to do with his opposition to him.[10] The remarks that John VI was eager to fight against the enemies of the cross and that he would thwart the advance of the Turks is something that Humbert would like to hear. From 1345 until 1347 Humbert had led a fleet against the emirate of Aydin which intended to reinforce the defences of Smyrna that had been captured by the fleet of the Holy League.[11] The leader of Aydin, Umur, had been a close ally and friend of Kantakouzenos and some of the most important campaigns of Andronikos III in the Balkans and in the Aegean had relied on his military support.[12] However, the negotiations with Bartholomew of Rome provided Kantakouzenos with the opportunity to try to improve relations with the papacy and he sent an embassy to Avignon which arrived the following year.[13]

The letter Kantakouzenos received from the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Hasan, which is dated 30 October 1349, promotes the theoretical authority of the Byzantine emperor. Kantakouzenos included in his *History* the Greek translation of the sultan's letter. It was originally written in Arabic and was based on an existing formula for correspondence with the Byzantine rulers which is attributed to Ibn Nazir al-Jaysh, who was a secretary to the Mamluk chancery.[14] The Sultan addresses the emperor as,

> the wisest in his religion, the most just in his place and country, the foundation of the faith and the dogma of the Christians, the immovable pillar of all the baptized, the helper of the dogmas of Christ, the sword of the Macedonians, Samson, the emperor of the Greeks, the emperor of the Bulgarians, the Asanians the Vlachs, the Rus the Alans, the honour of the faith of the Iberians and Syrians.[15]

The titles attributed to John VI by the Mamluk sultan indicate the theoretical authority of the Byzantine emperors as heads of Orthodox Christianity. In response to the weakening military and political strength of the empire, Byzantine diplomacy put more emphasis on the traditional role of the emperor as head of Christendom, rather than as a ruler of a powerful state.[16] It is in this context that in 1347 Kantakouzenos wrote to the Grand Duke of Moscow: 'The empire of the Romans, as well as the most holy great church of God (i.e. the patriarchate of Constantinople) is as you yourself have written the source of all piety and the teacher of law and sanctification'.[17]

Furthermore, the *History* emphasises the ceremonial role of the imperial office. Kantakouzenos wants to demonstrate that he and Andronikos III adhered to the rules and customs of imperial ceremony. He frequently points out that a certain action or ceremony was an old custom, or that it was carried out according to the old custom. This is the case in his descriptions of his own coronation, as well as his wife's, his son's Mathew and his daughter's Helena. In all these Kantakouzenos indicates that everything was carried out as it should have been.[18] Kantakouzenos provides a detailed description of the *prokypsis* of his daughter Theodora in Selymbria at the time of her marriage to the Ottoman ruler Orhan in 1346, and he mentions many instances in which *proskynisis* was performed. For instance, describing a meeting between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, he remarks,

> A custom has prevailed among the emperors of the Romans whenever one of their blood relations or otherwise one of those in office performs *proskynisis*, he kisses the foot of the emperor and is kissed in turn on the face.[19]

Moreover, striving to demonstrate that despite continuous political crises, territorial reduction and military defeats, the empire maintained its strength and the imperial office its prestige, Kantakouzenos relates that the emirs of Saruhan and Aydin recognised the Byzantine emperors as their sovereign by performing the *proskynisis*. Wishing to demonstrate that when in 1342 he was forced to flee to Serbia Stefan Dušan received him as an emperor, Kantakouzenos comments that the Kral ordered his magnates to follow the Byzantine custom of dismounting before addressing the emperor.[20]

Kantakouzenos connects proper imperial ceremony with legitimacy. In 1346 he was crowned emperor in Adrianople by the patriarch of Jerusalem and not in Constantinople by the patriarch of Constantinople.[21] In 1347, after his victory in the civil war and his establishment in Constantinople he deemed it necessary to be crowned again. He writes that nothing of the things sanctioned by the established tradition was omitted, so that none would be able to find a pretext to question his legitimacy.[22] It is probable that the claim that Kantakouzenos and Andronikos III adhered to imperial protocol and traditions is a response to criticism directed against the latter. Such criticism is reflected in the work of Nikephoros Gregoras who paints a negative image of Andronikos III. Much of Gregoras' criticism of Andronikos III focuses on the emperor's alleged indifference towards established traditions and ceremonies. As he comments, 'not even on the great imperial feast days did he carry out the customs of the imperial office, I mean the spectacular and popular processions and the kindly and generous benefactions and distributions of money and titles'.[23]

As far as the function of the imperial office is concerned, Kantakouzenos appears to promote the traditional idea of the emperor being the absolute ruler of a centralised state. In his account of the deliberations that followed the death

of Andronikos III in 1341, Kantakouzenos describes a meeting of high-ranking officials. The *epi tes trapezes*, George Choumnos brazenly dared to speak first, as Kantakouzenos writes, without having waited to hear the views of his superiors. He suggested that the holder of the highest office had to comply with the recommendations of those who were of lower rank. Kantakouzenos comments that he was incensed by Choumnos' rudeness and that such a suggestion would lead the empire to anarchy. Another official, Demetrios Tornikes, replied,

> What now? Should we make the empire of the Romans a democracy where everyone can counsel and speak whatever he thinks about greater and lesser matters and compel the superiors to respect what is decided?[24]

Similar conclusions could be drawn from the dialogue between Andronikos III and the Bulgarian emperor Michael Šišman in 1328 regarding territorial disputes, as is reported by Kantakouzenos. The Bulgarian ruler demanded a certain Byzantine town because he was married to the sister of the Byzantine emperor. Andronikos III replied that he would be happy to grant Šišman the governorship of Byzantine cities. However, he would do so in accordance with the Byzantine custom which dictates that when one of the emperor's sons is proclaimed emperor, all his brothers become his subjects and servants.[25]

By putting the phrase 'when one of the emperor's sons was proclaimed emperor' into the mouth of Andronikos III, Kantakouzenos appears to support the hereditary character and sacredness of the imperial office. Moreover, Kantakouzenos writes that on the eve of the civil war of 1321–1328 Andronikos III claimed that he inherited the throne and he reproduces a letter compiled by the bishop of Didymoteichon in 1342 which portrays his ascendancy to the throne as a divine provision.[26] However, Kantakouzenos needed to justify his support of the revolt of Andronikos III which led to the deposition of Andronikos II without being accused of supporting usurpation and acting against the sacred character of the imperial office. To achieve this Kantakouzenos claims that he would have never supported Andronikos III's revolt, if it had been motivated by greed and lust for power. Kantakouzenos supports the younger Andronikos because he was unfairly stripped of the imperial office and his life was under threat. Kantakouzenos comments that death is preferable to life for the one who until the previous day was respected and honoured as an emperor.[27] On the other hand, defending the sacredness of the emperor, Kantakouzenos states that he vehemently opposed the proposal to have Andronikos II assassinated. He argued that deposing an emperor, who had been appointed by God, in this manner, is inhumane and something that neither humans nor God would ever forgive. Unsurprisingly, Kantakouzenos attributes the suggestion to assassinate Andronikos II to his future enemies, Syrgiannes and Alexios Apokaukos.[28] By putting into the mouth of his opponents words which emphasise negative aspects of their personality, Kantakouzenos demonstrates that he and Andronikos III stood on a higher moral ground than their antagonists. Pointing out that Syrgiannes recommended the

murder of the elder emperor emphasises his duplicity. Shortly after the outbreak of the civil war of 1321–1328, Syrgiannes deserted Andronikos III and joined the elder emperor.

The description of the emperor as an absolute and hereditary monarch reflects the traditional Byzantine view which considered any form of government other than monarchy unstable by nature. Democracy was seen as the equivalent to chaos and mob rule.[29] However, the later Byzantines were familiar with non-monarchical institutions. Fourteenth-century authors questioned the system of the government of the empire. For instance, in a political treatise he compiled around 1300, the scholar Manuel Moschopoulos regarded Andronikos II as an illegal emperor who ruled the empire against nature. Writing at the end of the fourteenth century, George Pelagonia, who idealised the rulers of the Laskarid dynasty, and compiled a biography of John III Vatatzes (1221–1254), viewed the emperor as the holder of an elective public office which the Palaiologoi had turned into an hereditary one.[30]

It is interesting that the imperial oration of Nicholas Kabasilas to Kantakouzenos' son Mathew, who was elevated to the imperial office in 1353 by his father, questions the hereditary character of the imperial office. Mathew Kantakouzenos is presented as an emperor elected by his troops and Kabasilas remarks that imperial lineage did not necessarily foster virtue.[31] This contradicts Kantakouzenos' aforementioned views regarding the nature of the imperial office and his self-portrayal as the protector of the succession rights of the Palaiologoi. Furthermore, Kantakouzenos states that initially he had rejected the demand of his troops and most prominent of his followers to make Mathew an emperor. He argued that his aim was to protect the hereditary rights of John V. However, following his coronation in Constantinople in 1347, Kantakouzenos granted titles to his sons and to his closest allies. He claims that he had granted Mathew an honorary position above that of despot and below that of emperor, as Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) had done for his son Constantine.[32]

To understand this contradiction it is necessary to draw a distinction between Kantakouzenos the author and Kantakouzenos the emperor. Through his *History* Kantakouzenos defends the legitimacy of his actions and claims that his main motive was the protection of the hereditary rights of the Palaiologoi to the throne. Consequently, he connects himself and Andronikos III to important imperial virtues, promotes the sanctity of the imperial office and defends its hereditary nature. Trying to stave off criticism regarding his attitude towards John V Palaiologos, Kantakouzenos argues that the hostile actions of John V and of his supporters, who tried to force their entrance to Constantinople from Tenedos and depose him, forced him to make Mathew an emperor.[33]

Kantakouzenos the emperor, on the other hand, wanted to promote the interests of his clan. By presenting Mathew as an elected ruler, imperial propaganda provided him with some sort of legitimacy in his conflict with John V Palaiologos, which lasted until 1357. Moreover, Kantakouzenos had to face the complex political realities which emerged in the aftermath of the civil wars and

the fragmentation of the Byzantine state. These developments led him to take decisions which effectively limited the power of the throne and compromised the image of the emperor as an absolute ruler. This process began shortly after his self-proclamation as an emperor in Didymoteichon in 1341. Kantakouzenos incorporated in his *History* the *chrysobull* he issued in 1341/1342 to appoint his nephew John Angelos governor of Thessaly. Angelos would rule Thessaly for life and have the same enemies and friends as the emperor. His only obligation was to provide military assistance only when the imperial army was campaigning west of Christoupolis.[34] After the suppression of the Zealots in Thessalonica in 1350, John V Palaiologos and his followers were left there to govern the city and in 1352 their authority extended to Thrace at the expense of Mathew Kantakouzenos. In 1347, Mathew Kantakouzenos was granted for life the governorship of the Byzantine territories from Didymoteichon up to the area around Christoupolis. Meanwhile in 1349, Kantakouzenos' second son, Manuel, was sent to the Morea where he effectively ruled independently until his death in 1380.[35] Therefore, Kantakouzenos partitioned the empire. Unlike many of his predecessors who appointed their heir-presumptive as co-emperors, Kantakouzenos appointed emperors and governors and assigned them a territory to rule effectively as independent rulers. This was the result of a combination of dynastic interests, antagonisms and political realities. It was rather difficult for the emperor to have absolute control over the Byzantine possessions in the Peloponnese, and the contact between the capital and the remaining imperial possessions was becoming increasingly tenuous. This pattern of government was followed by Kantakouzenos' successors. The later Palaiologoi relied on the alliance of members of the extended imperial family who ruled as semi-independent rulers of the territories of the increasingly fragmented Byzantium.

The weakening position of the emperor is reflected in the compromise of important imperial prerogatives. In the preamble of a *chrysobull* issued by Andronikos II sometime after 1294, it is stated that it is an imperial duty to look after the military forces of the empire, to organise the military rolls and make the necessary arrangements for the provision of weapons.[36] Andronikos II did not tolerate military forces which were not under strict imperial control. In 1303, the despot Michael Angelos was accused of admitting into his service about 100 soldiers from Asia Minor and asked them to swear an oath of allegiance to him. George Pachymeres remarks that only the emperor had the right to demand such an oath of allegiance from the empire's soldiers.[37] This seems to have changed under Andronikos III. Kantakouzenos claims that he funded the imperial army and paid the salaries of mercenaries from his private property.[38] In another instance, Kantakouzenos relates that Andronikos III's campaign against the semi-independent Genoese ruler of Chios, Martino Zaccaria, was funded by 'many of the powerful men' who took part in this operation.[39] This contrasts with the campaign of Michael Tarchaneiotes in Thessaly in 1284, which was funded through a 10 per cent tax on the *pronoia* grants and not by wealthy private individuals, who probably led their own retinues.[40]

Furthermore, the building and reinforcing of static defenses was an imperial prerogative through which the emperor displayed his sovereignty and it was not uncommon for emperors to be praised as great builders.[41] According to Kantakouzenos, Andronikos III defended this prerogative, when he decided to campaign against Martino Zaccaria on the pretext that he was building fortifications without the emperor's consent.[42] In his assessment of Andronikos III's reign, Kantakouzenos portrays him as a builder-emperor and praises him for rebuilding cities, and restoring and reinforcing fortifications.[43] It is worth adding that imperial propaganda praised Andronikos II's project of reinforcing existing fortifications and building new ones in Asia Minor in the period 1290–1293. Theodore Metochites attributes the construction of fortifications to imperial generosity, which is an important imperial virtue.[44] Kantakouzenos' actions show that the maintenance of fortifications was no longer an imperial prerogative. He and other leading aristocrats had built private fortifications which apparently were manned by troops which were paid by them.[45] It is probable that severe financial difficulties forced Andronikos III to allow private individuals to take up part of the cost of the defense of the empire. Kantakouzenos implies that these developments did not undermine the position of the emperor. He claims that he wished to be outstripped by none in giving money and servants for the benefit of Byzantium's subjects and the honour of the emperors.[46] Therefore, it was the duty of wealthy individuals to contribute to the financing of the army and military operations. However, this was not done through the payment of taxes to the central government, but by direct payments to the soldiers of the imperial army and by the private funding of the building or restoration of fortifications.

Although the *History* indicates that the throne had lost absolute control over the military structures of the state, Kantakouzenos intensively promotes the martial virtues of the emperor. He writes that it was the emperor's duty to be involved with the military affairs of the empire, to defend against invading enemies, provide security to his subjects and when necessary to campaign against those who had attacked his territory. During peacetime the emperor should be involved with trials.[47] That the emperor should be a competent soldier is seen by Kantakouzenos as an essential requirement for his elevation to the throne. He comments that when in 1329 Andronikos III fell seriously ill, circumstances demanded the empire to be ruled by someone who had proven his courage in war, and among the reasons why he rejected the replacement of Andronikos III by Michael Katharos in the line of succession was that the latter lacked military training and experience.[48] Kantakouzenos' ideas about the role of the emperor as a military man indicate that in the later Byzantine period the imperial office had been heavily militarised and that the military virtues of the Byzantine rulers were emphasised more intensively than in the past.[49]

Furthermore, the *History* includes a significant number of descriptions of battle which portray Kantakouzenos and Andronikos III as dedicated warriors who risked their lives on the battlefield defending the empire. These are mostly short accounts of battle against Turkish raiding parties in Byzantine territories which focus on the heroic exploits of Kantakouzenos and Andronikos III.[50] Such descriptions of battle

seem to contradict traditional Byzantine military theory, which dictated that the general should stay away from the action so that he could observe the course of the battle and react accordingly. Nevertheless, throughout Byzantine history there were generals who did not adopt this principle and often heroic individualism was met with disapproval and admiration in equal measure.[51] This ambiguity can be found in the *History*. While Kantakouzenos extols heroic acts which are performed by the emperor on the field, he remarks in different circumstances that he would prefer to avoid the risks of battle. For instance, commenting on the decision to avoid a war with Serbia by having Syrgiannes murdered, Kantakouzenos remarked that they should not be reproached if they prevented the enemy from attacking by not risking fighting a battle, but by using trickery and stratagems. He adds that deceit is useful, particularly when the emperors succeed in deceiving the enemy and benefit themselves and their subjects.[52] Accounts of battle and statements which promote the use of deceit and trickery do not necessarily contradict the virtues of courage and valour. Instead, they indicate the exceptionally good judgment of the soldier-emperor and his ability to devise the proper course of action.

Moreover, Kantakouzenos employed heroic accounts of battle to demonstrate that under Andronikos III the empire was still able to defend its territories against the Turks and to criticise Andronikos II and his main enemy in the civil war of 1341–1347 Alexios Apokaukos, whom he blames for lacking basic military skills.[53] The reign of Andronikos III and Kanakouzenos is portrayed as a period of revival in the military strength and prestige of the empire. For instance, in 1323 Andronikos III supposedly disagreed with Andronikos II and protested the passive defence against a Bulgarian raid. He was allegedly burning with anger because he was unable to attack the invaders and challenged the Bulgarian emperor to single combat.[54] Describing another Bulgarian raid in 1328 Kantakouzenos comments that when Andronikos II was emperor the Bulgarians were able to invade the Byzantine lands without any resistance. However, seeing the new emperor leading a large and good army Michael Šišman decided to withdraw.[55] Similarly, emphasising that after the death of Andronikos III in 1341 he was able to defend the imperial territories effectively, Kantakouzenos relates that he and John Angelos successfully repelled an invasion led by the Bulgarian emperor John Alexander and defeated a Turkish army.[56]

Furthermore, it is likely that by emphasising the martial virtues of the imperial office and portraying Andronikos III and himself as dedicated warriors, Kantakouzenos indirectly criticises John V, despite the positive comments he makes about his personality and military skills.[57] When Kantakouzenos completed his *History* in the late 1360s, the Ottomans were establishing themselves in Thrace without encountering any significant military resistance from the government of John V.

Apart from a lack of military skills, Kantakouzenos' criticism of Andronikos II concentrates on the personal shortcomings of the emperor. The construction of the negative picture of the elder emperor is achieved through letters, which were exchanged between the two Andronikoi, and a significant number of speeches which constitute one of the most striking features of the *History*. One of the most

common ways in which Byzantine historians could criticise was to put words into the mouths of their protagonists. Kantakouzenos used speeches as the means to portray the personalities of the protagonists of his work and emphasise those positive and negative features of his heroes which served his personal agenda. The calmness, prudence, self-control, generosity and philanthropy, which were seen as important imperial virtues by imperial propagandists,[58] of Andronikos III are contrasted with the volatility of his grandfather.[59] Excessive anger is one of the main foibles Kantakouzenos attributes to Andronikos II. He relates that even before Michael IX's death in 1320 the elder emperor would easily lose his temper and criticise publicly his grandson, who found consolation in hunting and horse races.[60] This seems to be a response to criticism directed against Andronikos III's lifestyle. This is reflected in Gregoras who considers Andronikos III's lifestyle as one of the main reasons for his deposition by his grandfather and for the outbreak of civil war.[61] Criticism of the personal life of the emperor was not uncommon in late Byzantium. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century orators commended emperors for avoiding luxuries such as hunting, horse racing and baths.[62] The negative portrayal of Andronikos II culminated in the trial of Andronikos III. Kantakouzenos criticises the elder emperor for abusing his power and depicts him as an impatient and rude individual who accuses his grandson of disobedience and of acting wilfully against his authority. He also blames him for procedural irregularities, for being judge and accuser at the same time and accuses him of failing to fulfil his imperial duty to be an impartial judge.[63] It is interesting that Gregoras portrays Andronikos III as someone lacking self-control and calmness. He relates that Andronikos III ignored Andronikos II's advice to dissociate himself from the other conspirators. He appeared armed in his trial and, despite the attempts of his grandfather to appease him, Andronikos III left the capital and prepared for war.[64]

Andronikos II's attitude towards his opponents is vividly contrasted with that of Andronikos III's and Kantakouzenos' treatment of their enemies after their victories in the civil wars in 1328 and 1347. Kantakouzenos begins his narrative of the reign of Andronikos III by describing events that emphasise his philanthropy and generosity. He provides a lengthy description of an apparently unimportant event that occurred a few days after the entrance of Andronikos III in Constantinople in 1328. Andronikos III ordered Markos Kavallarios, who had insulted the emperor when he had reached the walls of Constantinople, to appear before him. Kantakouzenos remarks that everyone was wondering in what manner Andronikos III would have him executed. Surprisingly, the emperor pardoned him and everybody admired his philanthropy.[65] Furthermore, Kantakouzenos describes how he and Andronikos III tried to persuade the patriarch Isaias, who had supported them during the civil war of 1321–1328, not to seek the punishment of the clergymen who had allegedly mistreated him. Kantakouzenos relates that the patriarch was told that the outcome of a trial should not be determined by the desire for vengeance and the wrath of the judge. Instead, it should be the outcome of careful consideration. Unlike Andronikos II in the trial of his grandson, the patriarch should not be judge and accuser.[66]

Moreover, according to Kantakouzenos, the incapacity of Andronikos II to be an emperor was accentuated by the fact that he was heavily influenced by corrupt officials and lacked independent judgment. The responsibility for the actual outbreak of the civil war in 1321 is assigned not to the senior emperor himself but to Theodore Metochites. According to Kantakouzenos, on the eve of the civil war Andronikos III had asked his grandfather through Metochites to swear an oath that he would not be harmed. It is interesting that he mentions as precedent the oaths John III Vatatzes had sworn to Michael Palaiologos when he had returned to Nicaea after his flight to the Turks in the 1250s. Metochites refused to convey this message claiming that it would enrage the elder emperor. Kantakouzenos relates that after the end of the civil war, when he was informed about this, Andronikos II said that he would have been happy to swear an oath for the protection of his grandson.[67] Similarly, the outbreak of the last phase of the civil war in 1327 is attributed to what Kantakouzenos describes as the deceitful attitude and slanderous statements of the *protovestiarios* Andronikos Palaiologos and Theodore Metochites, who incited Andronikos II to resume the war against his grandson. Again Andronikos III's prudence and philanthropy is contrasted with his grandfather's unreasonable harshness. Andronikos II was ready to imprison or even execute the *protovestiarios* for he had planned to defect. However, Andronikos III's intervention saved his life. The *protovestiarios* was appointed governor of Bellagrada and in an act of ingratitude together with Metochites they plotted against Andronikos III and persuaded the senior emperor to resume the civil war.[68] The claim that Andronikos II's associates were responsible for the outbreak of the war, and not the emperor himself, serves Kantakouzenos' purpose of portraying himself as the defender of the rights of the Palaiologoi to the throne and enables him to portray Andronikos II as a ruler who had been deceived by his associates.

In conclusion, to legitimise his and Andronikos III's reign Kantakouzenos connects himself and Andronikos III to important elements of imperial ideology. He claims that they adhered to established customs regarding the function and ceremonial role of the imperial office. Kantakouzenos strives to paint a traditional portrait of the emperor which seems to ignore political and cultural changes. However, the *History* cannot conceal the fact that political and military realities prompted important changes in the function and prestige of the imperial office. Most importantly, the reign of Andronikos III saw the decline of important imperial prerogatives, while John VI Kantakouzenos effectively partitioned the empire. Andronikos II accumulates all the elements that make him unqualified to remain on the throne and therefore his deposition is justified. Kantakouzenos' criticism of the elder Andronikos focuses on the fact that he was not a soldier-emperor and on foibles of his personality. This criticism lacks the reasoning and sophistication of other critics of Andronikos II and most importantly of Pachymeres, who uses economic reasoning to explain the failures of imperial policies and blames Andronikos II for misusing the resources of the empire.[69] This does not mean that Kantakouzenos was a less sophisticated individual or less educated than Pachymeres. There was no reason for Kantakouzenos to criticise the fiscal

policies of Andronikos II, since there is no evidence to suggest that the financial situation of the empire improved under Andronikos III, who proved equally unable as his grandfather to thwart the Turkish expansion in western Anatolia. It also seems that the emphasis on the alleged irrational attitude of Andronikos II and the supposed fact that he did not adhere to traditional imperial ideals and virtues provide a more legitimate justification for his deposition than the mismanagement of the financial resources of the empire.

Notes

1 For the dating of the *History* see Nicol 1968: 100.
2 Kantakouzenos 4.2, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 13.
3 Kantakouzenos 4.2, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 13–15.
4 Kantakouzenos 4.2, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 15–20.
5 Jospeh the Philosopher, *Summation of Rhetoric*, ed. Walz 1832–36, vol. 3: 524–525, 542.
6 Magdalino and Nelson eds. 2010; Magdalino ed. 1994; Macrides 1980.
7 Kantakouzenos 3.64, 72, 74, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 396, 440, 447, 461.
8 Dölger 1961.
9 Kantakouzenos 4.1, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 10.
10 Kantakouzenos 4.3, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 20–24.
11 Setton 1976: 195–223; Carr 2014.
12 Kantakouzenos 2.29, 32, and 3.57, 63–66, 86, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 484–490, 496–499; vol. 2: 344–348, 390–407, 529–534; Lemerle 1957: 144–179.
13 Loenertz 1953.
14 Korobeinikov 2004: 59–62. He remarks that the name of the biblical hero Samson is a mistranslation of the word *ṣamṣām*.
15 Kantakouzenos 4.14, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 94–99.
16 Oikonomidès 1992: 74–75, 80–81.
17 Obolensky 1971: 265–266, whose translation this is; ed. Hunger and Kresten 1995: 478.
18 Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov 2013: 3; Kantakouzenos 3.27, and 4.4, 37, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 165–166; vol. 3: 29–30, 269.
19 Kantakouzenos 3.95, and 1.16, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 587–588; vol. 1: 76; Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov 2013: 3.
20 Kantakouzenos 2.5, and 3.43, 64, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 339–340; vol. 2: 261–262, 393. Soulis 1995: 56–61.
21 Kantakouzenos 3.27, 92, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 165–167, 564.
22 Kantakouzenos 3.3, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 29–30; Gregoras 15.11, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 2: 787–788.
23 Gregoras 11.11, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 1: 565.
24 Kantakouzenos 3.2, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 20–21.
25 Kantakouzenos 2.3, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 324–326.
26 Kantakouzenos 1.22, and 3.56, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 111; vol. 2: 342.
27 Kantakouzenos 1.3, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 21–22.
28 Kantakouzenos 1.9, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 43–45.
29 Bratianu 1937; Angelov 2007: 200–202.
30 Angelov 2007: 280–285, 310–327.
31 Jugie 1911: 116; Angelov 2007: 132.
32 Kantakouzenos 3.92, and 4.5, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 565–568; vol. 3: 33.
33 Kantakouzenos 4.35–36, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 255–269.
34 Kantakouzenos 3.53, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 312–322; Hunger 1978.
35 Kantakouzenos 4.7–8, 13, 37, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 47–49, 85, 269.

36 *Acta e diplomata Graeca*: ed. Miklosich and Müller 1860–90, vol. 5: 264. On the military role of the Byzantine emperor in the Middle Byzantine period see Chapter 9 by Frank Trombley and Shaun Tougher in this volume.
37 Pachymeres 11.13, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 4: 435.
38 Kantakouzenos 1.28, 38, 55, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 137, 184–185, 278–279.
39 Kantakouzenos 2.10–12, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 370–388.
40 Pachymeres 7.25, ed. Failler 1984–2000, vol. 3: 81.
41 Ivison 2000: 7.
42 Kantakouzenos 2.10–12, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 370–378.
43 Kantakouzenos 2.38, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 542.
44 Metochites, ed. Polemis 2007: 198–200.
45 Kantakouzenos 3.32, 76, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 195, 475; Gregoras 14.5, 11, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 2: 708, 741–742.
46 Kantakouzenos 1.28, 38, and 3.32, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 137, 184–185; vol. 2: 195.
47 Kantakouzenos 2.19, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 418–419.
48 Kantakouzenos 1.1, and 2.20, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 15, 425; Gregoras 8.3, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 1: 294–295, states that after the death of Michael IX, Andronikos II had not specified who was to succeed him.
49 Angelov 2007: 83.
50 Kantakouzenos 1.42, and 2.43, 21–22, 34, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 206–207, 390–391, 435–436, 505–507.
51 Haldon 2014: 276–278.
52 Kantakouzenos 1.25, and 3.30, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 452; vol. 2: 187.
53 Kyriakidis 2013; Kantakouzenos 2.38, and 3.77, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 538–539; vol. 2: 482.
54 Kantakouzenos 1.37, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 179.
55 Kantakouzenos 2.3, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 328.
56 Kantakouzenos 3.29, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 2: 180–181.
57 Kantakouzenos 4.1, 8, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 3: 9, 53.
58 Angelov 2007: 80–82.
59 Kantakouzenos 1.23, 29, 65, and 2.4, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 117, 143, 283–284,334–335.
60 Kantakouzenos 1.5, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 27.
61 Gregoras 8.1, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 1: 284–285.
62 Angelov 2007: 82.
63 Kantakouzenos 1.7, 12, 16, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 33, 57–58, 74–75.
64 Gregoras 8.6, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 1: 312–315.
65 Kantakouzenos 2.1, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 313–316.
66 Kantakouzenos 2.2, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 316–317.
67 Kantakouzenos 1.17, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 81–82. Gregoras 8.6, ed. Schopen 1829–55, vol. 1: 314, writes that Metochites rejected Andronikos III's proposal because the oaths were for the protection of his co-conspirators.
68 Kantakouzenos 1.43, ed. Schopen 1828–37, vol. 1: 210–212.
69 Angelov 2007: 260–263, 269–280.

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Part V

THE MATERIAL EMPEROR

Image, space and empire


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15

THE EMPEROR AT THE THRESHOLD

Making and breaking *taxis* at Hagia Sophia[1]

Alicia Walker

The imperial mosaics at Hagia Sophia are among the best-known depictions of imperial power in Byzantine art.[2] Indeed the monument itself was a testament to imperial resources and tenacity, not least of all as demonstrated by its foundation during the reign of Justinian I (527–565), when the building's construction must have served as a persuasive symbol for the reestablishment of imperial authority after an interlude of acute political instability.[3] But long after Justinian's era Hagia Sophia continued to serve as a site for imaging and performing and for stating and reiterating imperial power through the ceremonies that took place there and through the generous, even lavish, support that emperors bestowed upon this foundation during the course of its history.[4] Perhaps most importantly, Hagia Sophia was a, indeed the, site for the meeting of imperial and ecclesiastical authority, for the acting out of a bond between secular and sacred agents of power in the Byzantine world. The negotiation of imperial and patriarchal authority transpired not only through the decorations on the walls of the building and the donations that made its upkeep and adornment possible, but also through the rituals that were conducted within its walls. These choreographed performances reified the status of emperor and patriarch, the laity and the clergy, and the earthly and the divine.

Building from the work of numerous scholars who have offered compelling interpretations of the decorative and ceremonial programme of Hagia Sophia, I suggest that the rituals observed at the Great Church – especially those recorded in the well-known mid-tenth-century manual for court protocol, the *Book of Ceremonies* – worked in tandem with the monument's decorative programme to generate for the middle Byzantine emperor an exceptional status as the person on earth who moved most easily between, and penetrated most deeply into, various strata of earthly and otherworldly power.[5] Within this building and in the images on its walls, the Byzantine ruler was presented as the emperor, but he was also positioned as a member of the divine court, and in limited but significant ways, he acted like a priest. As a result, the emperor superseded the normal restrictions of social and cosmic order, and in so doing expressed a unique nature that no other contemporary human being possessed. Indeed he assumed a mysterious, contradictory character

that most readily recalled the paradoxically human-divine natures of Christ and the Virgin Mary, sacred people who also figured prominently in the late ninth- and tenth-century visual programmes of Hagia Sophia and the imperial palace following the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. I suggest that the mosaics adorning the walls of Hagia Sophia punctuate key moments in the imperial procession and liturgy as specified in the *Book of Ceremonies*.[6] Both text and art bespeak a broader effort at this time to structure and formalise ceremony as a way of demonstrating imperial control over the *taxis* (order) of the cosmos.[7] Most studies that explore the imperial liturgy at Constantinople begin their consideration at the threshold of the Great Church.[8] Yet, as described in the *Book of Ceremonies*, the rituals performed during the liturgy were part of a ceremonial sequence that began in the imperial palace and returned there after the liturgy was completed. It is essential, therefore, to examine both the ritual actions of the emperor and the monumental works of art at Hagia Sophia in relation to the ceremonial performance and decorative programme at the Great Palace.

In arguing that the meaning of the mosaics of Hagia Sophia was shaped by the physical and ceremonial contexts in which they were viewed, I follow an approach that has dominated the field of Byzantine art history for at least the last ten to fifteen years, one which looks at Byzantine works of art not – or, at least, not only – as autonomous aesthetic objects but as images and things that accrued meaning from the physical and social circumstances in which they were seen and used.[9] This, what we might call, anthropological approach to medieval art has also been undertaken with a sensitivity to how Byzantine 'ways of seeing' were in many respects different from how we look at images and things today.[10] In other words, visuality – that is, the way a society sees – is profoundly contingent and must be considered with keen attention to historical and cultural difference.[11] It is often the case that art historians rely on texts to see through the 'period eye' of the Byzantine viewer.[12] Although there are no middle Byzantine texts that expressly discuss the programme of mosaics at Hagia Sophia in the terms I propose, my interpretation nonetheless resonates with the evidence of primary sources that expound upon the mysterious sacred nature of some of the mosaic images in the church and imperial palace, as well as with medieval texts that describe Hagia Sophia as a transcendent space where a viewer is transported to an otherworldly domain in which the normal order of things is contravened.

Hagia Sophia as a transcendent space

As countless scholars of architecture, liturgy, art, and history have emphasised, the Byzantine church was a space in which heaven and earth were believed to meet and mingle.[13] The ninth-century patriarch of Constantinople, Photios, famously described the experience of entering the renowned Nea Ekklesia, the monumental and by all accounts spectacular church constructed by the emperor Basil I (867–886) at the imperial palace in 876, to be 'as if one has entered into Heaven itself'.[14] Nowhere was this transcendent state achieved more completely than at Hagia Sophia.[15] Through smell, sound, sight, and touch, those who

entered the Great Church were transported to another realm. The forceful impact of Byzantine devotional aesthetics is demonstrated by the well-known account from members of a late tenth-century Rus'ian delegation to Constantinople, who reported that upon entering the church:

> we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only knew that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty.[16]

As Liz James has argued, an immersive engagement of the senses was orchestrated in the Byzantine church to create a 'total sensory programme that disturbs the world in an unexpected fashion, for it seeks to reveal God to man'.[17] As a space of generative and revelatory disruption, Hagia Sophia facilitated the disturbance of social and cosmic order for the purpose of articulating not only the power of the divine, but also the special nature of the emperor. By at least the mid-tenth century, this was realised through the emperor's ritual actions within the building and through the juxtaposition of his actions with the monumental works of art that adorned Hagia Sophia. The mosaics introduced to the Great Church in the ninth and tenth centuries not only signposted the imperial liturgy performed in the building but also flagged the emperor's shifting social and cosmic status within these ceremonies. They thereby helped mark the accrual of exceptional power that accompanied the emperor's physical transitions in the course of the imperial liturgy as he moved through and between diverse earthly and divine hierarchies.

Humiliation or humility? The emperor before Christ

Key to my discussion is the famous mosaic of an emperor in *proskynesis* (prostration, obeisance) before Christ enthroned (Figs. 15.1 and 15.2).[18] The image appears over the central portal, the so-called Imperial Door, which leads from the inner narthex to the naos of Hagia Sophia (Fig. 15.4, C). The emperor wears the standard imperial regalia: the *stemma* crown (a band set with gems and surmounted at centre by a cross formed from pearls); a blue *divetesion* (long-sleeved tunic); a white *chlamys* (mantle) with a diaper pattern in gold, which is clasped at his right shoulder with a bejeweled *fibula* (pin); and pearl encrusted *tzangia* (red boots that were a prerogative of the imperial office).[19] To either side of Christ in medallions are portrayed the Virgin, at left, and an archangel, at right. Although the precise date of the mosaic is debated, scholars typically ascribe it to the first half of the tenth century.[20] The iconography of the scene is exceptional. No other middle Byzantine image shows an emperor in a similar position of full prostration. André Grabar offered one of the earliest interpretations of the mosaic's meaning, perceiving it as a statement of Christ's endowment of the emperor with imperial authority and divine wisdom. Grabar and other scholars have identified the prostrate figure as Leo VI (886–912) based on the echo of these ideas in his

literary works as well as the figure's resemblance to portraits of Leo.[21] Yet these studies did not account fully for the emperor's unusual posture.[22]

In a well-known article of 1976, Nicholas Oikonomidès further promoted the idea that the mosaic depicts the emperor Leo VI, but posited that it was installed after his death, around the year 920.[23] He read the emperor's pose of *proskynesis* as a statement of penitential humiliation related to Leo's disgrace brought about in 906 by his non-canonical fourth marriage to his mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina, following the birth of their son, the future Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 945–959). Nicholas I Mystikos, patriarch of Constantinople, had agreed to baptise the child on the condition that Leo would expel Zoe from the imperial palace. Shortly after the baptism, however, Leo reunited with Zoe, commissioned a palace priest to officiate their marriage, and had Zoe proclaimed empress. Nicholas refused to recognise this problematic union or to absolve Leo of the sin it embodied. The conflict came to a head during the feasts of Christmas (906) and Epiphany (907), when Nicholas publicly forbade Leo's passage into Hagia Sophia through the Imperial Door, forcing him to enter the church via a side portal.[24]

Leo deposed Nicholas in 907, and the new patriarch, Euthymios, was more accommodating of the emperor's demands, although he, too, refused to sanction Leo's fourth marriage and required that the emperor remain in a penitential state. Following Leo's death in 912, a document surfaced stating Leo's confession of sin and renunciation of his fourth marriage. Nicholas returned to power in 912 and pardoned Leo for his sin. The controversy persisted, however, assuming ecclesiastical dimensions as a conflict of investiture between the partisans of Euthymios and Nicholas. The situation was fully resolved only in 920, eight years after Leo's death, when Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944) became the regent for Constantine VII, having married the young emperor to his daughter, Helena Lekapene in 919.[25]

Key to Oikonomidès' argument is a passage in the life of patriarch Euthymios, which recounts that on the feast of Epiphany, in response to Nicholas' second refusal to allow Leo entrance to Hagia Sophia, the emperor fell prostrate before the patriarch at the threshold of the Imperial Door and admitted his sin.[26] Based on these historical circumstances, Oikonomidès interprets the mosaic as a direct representation of Leo VI's penitential state and dates the mosaic to 920, the year in which Leo's absolution from sin was confirmed.[27] Yet in reading the image as one of penance and humiliation, Oikonomidès did not consider the diverse significances that *proskynesis* held in Byzantium, nor did he properly situate the mosaic within the sequence of ritual observances that unfolded around it.[28]

Echoing the scepticism already voiced by scholars of middle Byzantine art, I consider Oikonomidès' interpretation of the mosaic over the Imperial Door at Hagia Sophia as one concerned primarily with penitential humiliation to be misguided.[29] Rather, when considered in conjunction with rituals documented in the *Book of Ceremonies* – and, just as importantly, when read in relation to several other mosaics that were introduced to Hagia Sophia and the Great Palace in the ninth and tenth centuries – this image can be understood as a visualisation of the ineffable mystery of imperial power, which derived from the emperor's exceptional status

as a person who held rank in multiple social and cosmic orders, as the undisputed head of the supreme earthly court in Constantinople, but also as a privileged member of the otherworldly, but no less real divine court of heaven.[30] In tandem with this cosmic identity, the rituals at Hagia Sophia can be understood to have accorded the emperor another significant status as a symbolic member of the clergy.[31] The placement of the image of the prostrating emperor over the central door leading from the narthex to the naos at Hagia Sophia triggers a disruption of the usual order of things, thereby preparing viewers for an exceptional performance of imperial power that presented the ruler as operating outside normal social and cosmic categories and as able to move across the classifications that ordinarily structured and divided the Byzantine world.[32]

My reading implicitly challenges a tendency in the past treatment of the narthex mosaic at Hagia Sophia to interpret it in ways that are too closely aligned with unique historical texts and contexts. Specific events may have inflected the reading of the image in a temporary way, perhaps especially when memories of Leo's humiliation were still fresh in the collective conscious of courtiers and clergy.[33] But it seems unlikely that the mosaic was commissioned with the intent to record in perpetuity an instance of imperial-patriarchal conflict, or to create in the narthex a tone of patriarchal dominance over the emperor. Rather we can see the mosaic over the Imperial Door as aimed at supporting the mutual interests of emperor and patriarch. This goal would have entailed, foremost, the promotion of liturgical ritual at Hagia Sophia as an embodiment of harmony between church and state, an ideal which depended on cooperation (rather than antagonism) between sacred and secular leaders. We should understand the narthex mosaic primarily through consideration of comparatively perennial ritual practices and imperial ideologies rather than exceptional and transient historical circumstances.[34]

The emperor's image: Ritual and art in the 'regular procession' and liturgy

The imperial liturgy was part of a larger ritual sequence that was not isolated to the Great Church, but rather began and ended in the imperial palace. In order to understand the full ceremonial import of the mosaics at Hagia Sophia, we should consider them within the broader architectural and visual connections that emerged across the spaces and decorative programmes of church and palace, a dialogue emphasised through the choreographed movements of the emperor. It is also necessary to take into consideration the audience for this performance of imperial ideologies. As far as we know, the immediate viewers for the imperial procession and liturgy were courtiers (especially high-ranking ones) and privileged members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Although the demes (the hippodrome factions, which held political associations and played a role in state ceremonial) participated in these rituals, they did so in a highly orchestrated fashion and served, in the end, as a merely symbolic representation of the people. While a broader population might have been able to glimpse the imperial entourage as it moved from

the Great Palace to the Great Church, the *hoi polloi* were never closely gathered around the emperor, nor did crowds of common people accompany him when he entered Hagia Sophia. These ceremonial performances were primarily directed at a select audience of courtiers and clergy, who were themselves participants in these same rituals.

Two contiguous sequences especially articulated the emperor's unique character: the 'regular procession' of the emperor from the palace to Hagia Sophia (and back again), and the liturgy performed within Hagia Sophia on major feast days, when the emperor was in attendance. The description of the so-called regular procession and liturgy constitutes Chapter One of the *Book of Ceremonies*, a location in the text that presumably reflects their essential place not only in the ceremonial life of the court, but also in the conception of what constituted imperial *taxis*.[35] After all, it was the stated aim of the patron of the *Book of Ceremonies*, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, to reestablish the regularity and beauty of court ceremony so as to enhance the dignity and authority of the imperial office.[36] Within the text, tremendous care is exerted to record the diverse classes of people involved in imperial ceremonial and their places in the social, spatial, and ritual hierarchies that the book describes. Yet, in the same way that order and classification articulated social and sacred status at the Byzantine court, the ability to traverse categories and to shift status was also significant. Indeed the only individual in the *Book of Ceremonies* who regularly mutates status and moves across prescribed social and spatial divisions – who, in other words, breaks *taxis* – is the emperor. His ritualised movement between categories and his symbolic shifting of identities demonstrated his exceptional power and authority. Nevertheless it was only by insisting on rigid, legible categories that these ceremonies created a scenario in which the emperor's transformative and transgressive powers became perceptible.

As described in Chapter One of the *Book of Ceremonies*, the regular procession to Hagia Sophia began in the palace. After exiting his bed chamber, the emperor's first stop was the Chrysotriklinos (Fig. 15.3, A), the imperial throne room. This eight-sided room included an apsidal projection at its east end in which was located the imperial throne. The room had been decorated in the mid-ninth century by Michael III (842–867) with figural mosaics.[37] A monumental inscription recorded that this iconographic programme was an act of iconophilic celebration.[38] Of special note, in the conch over the throne was placed an image of the enthroned Christ. The *Book of Ceremonies* prescribes that after the emperor enters the throne room, he should pray before the depiction of the enthroned Christ. This portrayal of Christ is glossed as 'the holy image of our Lord and God as both God and man seated on a throne',[39] a description that recognises the sacred mystery that the image encoded as a representation of Christ's theandric (simultaneously human and divine) nature, and his exceptional ability to merge the normally discrete categories of earthly and heavenly beings. When the emperor sat upon his throne, the visual juxtaposition of him below the enthroned Christ created a potent image paralleling the unique nature of their power.

The emperor then began a lengthy series of processions and receptions around the palace, visiting chapels, receiving members of the court, and changing his attire and accessories. During these ceremonial movements, the primary ritual gesture carried out by the emperor was *proskynesis*. The emperor performed *proskynesis* – often specified as triple *proskynesis* – a total of eight times within chapels and before sacred objects.[40] He also received *proskynesis* three times from different groups of courtiers.[41] The emperor eventually departed via the Chalke Gate (the main ceremonial entrance to the palace) (Fig. 15.3, B), over which was positioned another famous image of Christ, the so-called Christ Chalkites (a type showing Christ standing on a footstool, typically with his hand raised in blessing).[42] The emperor then followed a pathway from the palace through the Augustaion (the tetrastoon [plaza enclosed by four stoa] between the imperial palace and Hagia Sophia) (Fig. 15.3, C), where he passed statues of imperial forerunners, including the famed columnar equestrian statue of Justinian I (Fig. 15.3, D).[43]

The emperor then arrived at Hagia Sophia, entering through the southwest entrance (Fig. 15.4, A) that led to the vestibule adjacent to the south end of the narthex. Behind a draped booth (*metatorion*) the emperor's crown and *chlamys* were removed.[44] Relieved of his royal insignia, the emperor proceeded into the narthex through the so-called Beautiful Door (Fig. 15.4, B; Fig. 15.5). A mosaic visible today above the Beautiful Door shows Justinian I and Constantine I presenting their foundations of the Great Church and the city of Constantinople, respectively, to the enthroned Virgin and Christ Child (Fig. 15.6). The date of this mosaic is uncertain, but current scholarly opinion holds that it was introduced to the church in the first half of the tenth century.[45] The two emperors assume a pose of shallow *proskynesis*, bowing at the waist toward the Virgin and Child to express deference and reverence. Depicting celebrated emperors of the Byzantine past – and the two rulers most immediately associated with the foundation of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia – the mosaic includes inscriptions identifying these historical figures as 'Constantine the Great emperor among the saints' (Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις μέγας βασιλεύς) and 'Justinian emperor of illustrious memory' (Ἰουστινιανὸς ὁ ἀοίδιμος βασιλεíε).[46] As such, the mosaic shares with the *Book of Ceremonies* a core concern for claiming continuity with hallowed, ancient practice – the *taxis* of imperial rule – by implying that the current emperor perpetuates social and cosmological order through the proper observance of ritual in the image of his most illustrious predecessors. By portraying past emperors in the presence of the divine, the mosaic above the door leading to the narthex marked this portal as a privileged point of communication between earthly and heavenly powers.

Keeping in mind the significance of the Beautiful Door in marking passage into the liminal space of the narthex (a transitional zone between the profane world outside the church and the sacred space of the naos), the depictions of Constantine, Justinian, and the Virgin and Child in the mosaic above this portal can also be understood to create meaningful connections with other images and ceremonial practices encountered in the ritual sequences described by the *Book*

of Ceremonies. The image above the Beautiful Door anticipates the figure of the Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child in the ninth-century mosaic that looms over the apse area of the sanctuary itself (Figs. 15.7 and 15.8; Fig. 15.4, I).[47] At the same time, the depiction of the Virgin and Christ enthroned recalled the mosaic image of Christ enthroned in the apse of the Chrysotriklinos (as well as the living image of the emperor himself, who occupied the imperial seat beneath Christ's theandric depiction). In this way, the mosaic over the Beautiful Door served as a visual hinge between two key sequences of the imperial procession and liturgy: the first from the Chrysotriklinos to the Beautiful Door, the second from the Beautiful Door to the apse of Hagia Sophia. At this turning point, Constantine and Justinian assume the roles of high-ranking courtiers, appearing before their divine regents in a posture of respectful humility. Through their postures, they evoke the same ritual motions that both the emperor and his courtiers had repeatedly performed before revered objects and individuals in the palace. Constantine and Justinian subtly initiated an extension of the state hierarchy into the cosmological scale of the heavenly court.[48]

At the Beautiful Door, the emperor met the patriarch, surrounded by the clergy, for the first time. In this moment of the ceremony, it is tempting to see the uncrowned and uncloaked emperor as vulnerable or reduced, and, in particular, as subordinated to patriarchal authority. While such an interpretation is possible, it is worthwhile to consider an alternative possibility: that the removal of the emperor's insignia prepared him to enter, temporarily, a different status before the eyes of man and God, one that ultimately enhanced rather than diminished his authority. It was by relinquishing his crown and *chlamys* that the emperor was able to enter the church under a different guise, as a temporary member of the ecclesiastical orders.[49]

Upon entering the narthex, the emperor was greeted by the patriarch and his ecclesiastical retinue. The emperor made *proskynesis* before the Gospels held by the archdeacon, and then kissed the patriarch.[50] As George Majeska notes, the exchange of kisses between emperor and patriarch marked them as equals,[51] a status further communicated by their joining hands as they proceeded to the Imperial Door (the central portal leading to the naos above which appears the aforementioned image of an imperial figure in full *proskynesis* before an enthroned Christ) (Figs. 15.1, 15.2, and 15.4, C). Before entering the naos, the emperor received a candle and performed *proskynesis* three times,[52] just as he had at various points in the palace before the sacred shrines and holy objects housed there.

The ritual processions, greetings, and venerations up to this point can be read in relation to one another and with regard to the architectural and decorative contexts in which they are performed. As noted already, during the usual ceremonies observed in the palace as part of the procession to the Great Church, the emperor performed *proskynesis* eight times within chapels and in front of sacred relics and crosses; in addition he received *proskynesis* at least three times from individual or groups of courtiers.[53] Granted, *proskynesis* was an act that could take many forms, from a shallow to a deep bow, to the bending of one or both knees, or even full

prostration on the floor. In the *Book of Ceremonies*, the instances of *proskynesis* performed in the palace prior to departure for Hagia Sophia are in only one instance specified as involving the courtiers' 'falling down' (πίπτουσι) before the emperor,[54] and we might assume that the other acts of *proskynesis* in this sequence of receptions involved shallower bows. Regardless of the degree of prostration, the repetition of *proskynesis* in the course of the rites and processions that precede the emperor's entrance to Hagia Sophia made the act of obeisance that the emperor performed at the entrance to the Imperial Door less exceptional and cast the performance of *proskynesis* in the narthex mosaic as a regular, indeed almost constant, ritual act within the Byzantine courtly context. Again, *proskynesis* was not necessarily an act of penance or humiliation. [55] As attested by the multiple instances in which the emperor assumed *proskynesis* in the procession from the Chrysotriklinos to Hagia Sophia, the pose was instead coded – repeatedly – as a gesture of humility and respect before sacred spaces, objects, and people.

From this perspective, we can appreciate the way in which a high-ranking Byzantine courtly or ecclesiastical viewer might have seen the image in the narthex of Hagia Sophia not as one of self-abasement or repentance, but instead as one that articulates a relationship between Christ and the emperor as ruler and subject, much as the courtiers in attendance at this ceremony would have themselves paid obeisance to the emperor on his throne in the Chrysotriklinos or elsewhere in the palace. In addition, Byzantine viewers must have recognised in this meeting a theophanic revelation, with the emperor's prostration representing an appropriate somatic response. Rather than a figure humiliated, the emperor in the tympanum above the Imperial Door is shown as an individual of exceptional worthiness and status because he appears directly before the ruler of Heaven, occupying the same spatial zone as Christ. Charles Barber has described this unusual representation as one of 'unmediated presence' between emperor and Christ in which 'The emperor is worshipping Christ himself, not an icon of Christ'.[56] The position of the emperor, mediating between this world and the next, represented the most ineffable aspect of his character, the level on which this most privileged of earthly inhabitants approached the divine.

In this respect, the mosaic over the Imperial Door might be understood as one of several images encountered in the course of the regular imperial procession and liturgy that confronted the participant with a theological mystery. To the degree that the mosaic depicts a conundrum – an earthly emperor appearing before the heavenly ruler, Christ, in His otherworldly court – it has something in common not only with the images of Constantine and Justinian in shallow *proskynesis* before the Virgin Mary and Christ Child above the Beautiful Door (see Figs. 15.5 and 15.6), but also with two other important mosaics of this period: the aforementioned depictions of the enthroned Christ in the Chrysotriklinos and the enthroned Virgin and Christ Child in the apse of Hagia Sophia (see Figs. 15.7 and 15.8). These latter two images represented individuals who likewise confounded the otherwise strict divisions that ordered the Byzantine cosmos by occupying what were usually understood to be mutually exclusive categories of the human and the divine.[57]

As noted earlier, the image of Christ in the Chrysotriklinos was positioned above the imperial throne, and the gloss on this image in the *Book of Ceremonies* brings to the fore its ineffable, mysterious character, describing it as 'the holy image of our Lord and God as both God and man seated on a throne'.[58] The emphasis on Christ's theandric nature, his embodiment of an impossible duality, articulates a potent sacred mystery: his ability to participate in two usually discrete ontological categories. Furthermore, as John Breckenridge has argued, it is possible that the iconography of Christ enthroned in the Chrysotriklinos matched that of the enthroned Christ in the tympanum above the Imperial Door, a parallel that would have emphasised the connection between these spaces.[59] The image above the Imperial Door not only recapitulated a theological oxymoron in the figure of the theandric Christ, but introduced an additional sacred mystery by showing the emperor who, although a mere man, was projected into the intimate, sacred space of the divine ruler. Situated at the point of the emperor's transition into the church, this image dislocated the usual ceremonial image of the emperor as the head of the earthly court and repositioned him in a subservient but eminently prestigious station before Christ. It triggered for the viewer the expectation that at this juncture, the status of the emperor was shifting, not in a way that diminished his authority but rather in a way that opened onto new horizons of expectation for imperial power.

Much as the mosaic image of Christ in the Chrysotriklinos and the mosaic image of the emperor above the Imperial Door at Hagia Sophia disrupted the usual categories of earthly and cosmic order, so did the image of the enthroned Virgin and Child in the conch of the apse (see Figs. 15.7 and 15.8). This mosaic was inaugurated in 867 and was one of the first monumental figural images to be added to the decorative programme of Hagia Sophia following the Triumph of Orthodoxy (and the end of Iconoclasm) in 847. As Liz James among others has discerned in the homily of the patriarch Photios, delivered from the ambo in Hagia Sophia to commemorate the renovation and redecoration of Hagia Sophia in 867, the Virgin was presented as a sacred mystery, the mother who remained a Virgin, giving birth to a man who is also God:

> A virgin mother carrying in her pure arms, for the common salvation of our kind, the common Creator reclining as an infant – that great and ineffable mystery of the Dispensation! A virgin mother, with a virgin's and a mother's gaze, dividing in indivisible form her temperament between both capacities, yet belittling neither by its incompleteness.[60]

As James explains, Photios' subsequent emphasis on the lifelike qualities of the Virgin Mary and Christ's depiction was crucial to the spiritual potency of the image: 'For the Byzantine believer, the existence of the mosaic of the Virgin disturbed the religious space by promising to make the divine real'.[61] Within Hagia Sophia, the viewer was 'transported into a visionary world . . . to a point where the ontological differences between the artist's imitations and their objects was

erased, there was no boundary between the object and the living body, between the physical realm and the spiritual'.[62] Photios extols the power of the image over that of the word to inspire spiritual understanding, stating: 'The Virgin is holding the Creator in her arms as an infant. Who is there who would not marvel, more from the sight of it than from the report, at the magnitude of the mystery, and would not rise up to laud the ineffable condescension that surpasses all words?'[63] In addition, the Virgin is accompanied by two archangels in the soffits of the great eastern arch (Fig. 15.9). Each archangel wears the imperial *chlamys* and red boots and holds a staff and a globe, attributes that stake a claim to imperial and courtly status, thereby continuing the idea of the interpenetrating social and cosmic hierarchies of heaven and earth (Fig. 15.10).[64]

Together, these mosaic images in the imperial palace and Hagia Sophia – linked together through the pathways and strategic stopping points of the imperial liturgy – engaged the viewer in a series of visually communicated paradoxes, each of which gained legibility and authority through repeated, sequential comparison with the others. The images of emperors in *proskynesis* – both in the mosaics above the Beautiful and Imperial Doors, and in the ceremony of the liturgy – operated in a similar fashion, as visually disclosed sacred mysteries. Through his physical and artistic appearance at Hagia Sophia, the emperor disrupted cosmic divisions between human and divine. The fact that he was the one person who could move between these ontological orders not only bespoke his unique powers, but also reified the strength and exclusivity of these categories for the rest of humanity.[65]

The unusual role that the emperor played in the liturgy at Hagia Sophia set in motion an additional shift in imperial status. Majeska argues that the rituals conducted within the church unsettled the usual divisions between laity and clergy by allowing the emperor to transgress the distinctions ordinarily observed between these two groups.[66] It is crucial to note that in the course of the liturgical ceremony, the emperor never fully joins the ranks of the clergy; rather, he blurs the boundaries between social categories by, for example, temporarily crossing into spaces typically off limits to the laity, walking in processions normally restricted to members of the ecclesiastical orders, and performing ritual gestures usually carried out by a priest.[67] In addition, much as he had during the stages of the ceremony observed in the palace, the emperor venerated sacred spaces and objects by performing *proskynesis* as he moved through and past them.

After the emperor and patriarch entered the naos, they proceeded hand in hand toward the ambo (the raised lectern at the centre of the naos) (Fig. 15.4, D) and passed around it to enter the solea (the elevated, enclosed passage leading from the ambo to the templon) (Fig. 15.4, E). While the patriarch continued into the sanctuary, the emperor stopped at the porphyry disk located just before the entrance in the templon (the barrier demarcating the transition between the altar area and the naos) (Fig. 15.4, F). The patriarch held open the door leading into the bema (the area to the east of the templon, where the altar and apse are located) (Fig. 15.4, G), and the emperor performed triple *proskynesis* before the door and then entered into the sanctuary.[68] After the patriarch kissed the altar (Fig. 15.4, H), he lifted the altar

cloth to the emperor's lips. The emperor then presented gifts to the church: a pair of altar cloths and a bag of coins. The emperor made *proskynesis* before the liturgical vessels: the holy patens, chalices, and the textiles that represented the swaddling clothes of Christ.[69] The emperor then exited the bema with the patriarch and passed through the ambulatory, pausing at a gold cross to offer prayers and perform triple *proskynesis*. The patriarch passed a censer to the emperor, and the emperor censed the cross. The emperor then parted ways with the patriarch, and made a final stop before a chapel that contained the relics of the passion. The emperor performed triple *proskynesis* and kissed each relic before continuing into the *metatorion* (the imperial chamber) (Fig. 15.4, J) at the south-east corner of the church.[70]

Majeska posits that at this stage in the liturgy, the emperor behaved like a member of the clergy, entering the sanctuary, which was otherwise off limits to laymen, and kissing the altar and liturgical items. In particular, the emperor kissed the altar cloth in the same fashion that the patriarch did and censed the altar area, an act normally performed by high-ranking clergy.[71] However throughout these actions, the emperor always followed the patriarch's lead, and once these actions were concluded, the emperor did not remain within the sanctuary, but instead relinquished the space to members of the clergy.

During the subsequent Great Entrance (during which the Eucharistic gifts were delivered to the altar), the emperor again played an active role in a way that mingled sacred and secular identities. While the emperor had entered the naos without his imperial regalia, prior to the Great Entrance he donned his *chlamys* (the ceremonial cloak that constituted one of the key elements of his regalia), which had been brought to the *metatorion* from the south-west vestibule (although he was still without his crown). He then led the members of the senate and the *koubouk-leion* (emperor's personal servants), escorting the Eucharistic gifts from the ambo (Fig. 15.4, D) to the door in the templon barrier (Fig. 15.4, G).[72] Yet the emperor did not enter the sanctuary as would a member of the ecclesiastical orders, but instead stood next to the entrance to the bema. He was censed by the archdeacon, an action also performed around the patriarch and the altar.

Furthermore, as they passed the emperor, members of the clergy directed to him the same commemoration they offer one another as they enter the sanctuary: 'May the Lord God remember your majesty in his kingdom, now and ever and ever more.'[73] As Majeska notes, in the Great Entrance the emperor was again ritually encoded in an ambiguous way. He led the procession, thereby functioning similarly to a member of the minor ecclesiastical orders, and he was commemorated and censed in a fashion identical to the patriarch and clergy.[74] Yet throughout this stage of the ceremony, the emperor wore the *chlamys*, a garment associated with his imperial office, and remained outside the ecclesiastical zone of the sanctuary.[75]

This ritual ambiguity was somewhat resolved in the moment of the Kiss of Peace, when the emperor mounted the sanctuary platform but again stayed outside the bema while he exchanged the kiss first with the patriarch, then with the high-ranking clergy.[76] After stepping down from the platform, he exchanged the kiss of peace with the members of the senate and other high-ranking court

officials. As Majeska notes, this performance visually orchestrated the emperor's symbolic role as mediator between the sacred and secular worlds, between heaven and earth. He stands at the juncture between the sanctuary and the nave, and he communicates with the powerful ranks of both clergy and court.[77]

Finally, at the moment of communion, ambiguities in the emperor's lay versus ecclesiastical status were reiterated. The emperor did not physically join the clergy within the sanctuary, instead taking communion at the side of the bema.[78] During the liturgy for Christmas, it is specified that he accepted communion in a manner similar to that of a member of the ecclesiastical orders, receiving the bread and wine separately and drinking directly from the chalice (whereas a layperson would have taken the wine and bread together).[79] In this as in other aspects of the liturgy, Majeska observes that 'we have an unclear set of symbols of the emperor's status . . . [his] treatment is neither wholly that of a clergyman nor wholly that of a layman'.[80] Again, throughout this stage of the ceremony, the emperor's imperial insignia were limited to his *chlamys*. It was only at the end of the service, after the emperor exited the church at the south-east corner and entered the shrine of Holy Well (Fig. 15.4, K), that the imperial crown was restored by the patriarch.[81] Rather than seeing the absence of the crown as detracting from his power or as a sign of his subjugation to ecclesiastical authority, we might instead understand this state of deemphasised imperial identity to facilitate his ritual intersection and ambiguous ceremonial alignment with various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The physical manifestation of secular and sacred identities in the spatial divisions of the church (especially as embodied by the templon, i.e. the barrier separating the naos and altar – respectively the lay and ecclesiastical – areas of the church), the ceremonial positions of the participants, the garments worn by those present, and the ritual actions they performed transpired under highly controlled circumstances, as did the emperor's ambiguous disruption of this social and sacred order. But this disturbance can be understood as enhancing (rather than diminishing) the supreme authority of the emperor by marking him as someone, indeed the only one, capable of moving across these otherwise mutually exclusive and highly regulated hierarchies of sacred and secular space and identity. The mosaic over the Imperial Door (see Figs. 15.1, 15.2, and 15.4, C) gestured toward the unique aspect of the emperor's power that was enacted within the walls of Hagia Sophia by depicting him in an ambiguous state, as both the all-powerful earthly ruler and the all-humble subject of Christ. He is shown as a privileged witness of theophany and as a high-ranking member of the heavenly court.

Middle Byzantine imperial portraits in the galleries of Hagia Sophia

This interpretation of the figural mosaics on the lower level of Hagia Sophia suggests new possibilities for how we might think about the nature of several other middle Byzantine imperial mosaics within Hagia Sophia, those of Alexander I (912–913), brother of Leo VI (Fig. 15.11), Zoe (1042) with Constantine IX Monomachos

(1042–1055) (Fig. 15.12), and John II Komnenos (1118–1143) with Eirene and their son Alexios (Figs. 15.13 and 15.14).[82] Two aspects of these three mosaics are important for understanding the very different work they accomplished within the decorative and ideological programmes of Hagia Sophia. First, they are all located in the upper galleries, outside the pathways of liturgical ceremonies (although the mosaics can be glimpsed from the naos by viewers who know where to look for them).[83] Second, these three mosaics represent historical figures – identified by inscriptions – who lived contemporaneously with the execution of the mosaics in which they are depicted and were the mosaics' likely patrons.

The image of Alexander I is one of the great oddities of Byzantine art, crammed in a most undignified fashion along the edge of a vault in the north gallery.[84] The mosaic is barely visible, although it can be glimpsed as one moves westward at the ground level. The mosaic is unexceptional not only because its impossibly awkward and obscure placement undermines its impact, but also because it merely recapitulates a visual vocabulary prevalent throughout middle Byzantine imperial iconography – in coins, seals, ivories, manuscripts, public statuary – and as such does not stake a claim for an altered and enhanced state of the emperor within the walls of Hagia Sophia. Instead Alexander appears here as do numerous emperors in other official images of the era, facing frontally, donning the usual imperial regalia, and holding conventional attributes of imperial power. Most importantly, this is not a theophanic image: Alexander is not portrayed in the presence of Christ or any other divine figures.

The mosaics of Zoe and Constantine IX and John II, Eirene, and Alexios are more boldly situated along the east wall of the south gallery, in a zone of the church that likely served as an imperial apartment.[85] From the floor of the church, the mosaics are partially visible, and scholars have posited that these views were intended to communicate with the emperor and/or patriarch during the course of the liturgy, particularly as they moved eastward from the Imperial Door to the altar.[86] Like the mosaic of Alexander, these imperial portraits follow standard iconography and project a conventional sense of the relationship between imperial and divine authority, presenting the rulers as benefactors of the church, offering gifts to Christ and the Virgin. But unlike Constantine I and Justinian I depicted in the mosaic above the Beautiful Door, whose gifts were the magnanimous donations of the city of Constantinople and the church of Hagia Sophia, the middle Byzantine emperors offer more modest donations of money (depicted in the form of bags of coin) and charters promising continued support. Such interactions fall squarely within the long-standing visual tradition of donor iconography and, although depicted within a visual field shared by earthly and divine figures, do not challenge the order of things in any radical way. In all three cases, these images retain a visual vocabulary familiar from official Byzantine art, and present the imperial figures in roles of benefactors and rulers without unsettling the usual structure of earthly and cosmic *taxis*. In contrast, the image over the Imperial Door disrupts expectations and lays open the possibility of unique roles and powers for the ruler within Hagia Sophia.

Making and breaking *taxis* in word and image

Two final questions, both of which are frequently asked in the scholarly literature, should be addressed in conclusion: Which emperor was the mosaic over the Imperial Door intended to portray? And why was it added to the church and by whom? As already noted, since the rediscovery of the mosaic over the Imperial Door, scholars have recognised an affinity between the imperial figure and the portrait type of Leo VI.[87] Yet, Constantine VII conformed to the portrait type of his father, making him just as likely a candidate. A mid-tenth-century ivory icon depicting an imperial figure praying to Christ and inscribed with Constantine VII's name not only recalls the circumstances of unmediated divine presence depicted in the mosaic over the Imperial Door but also shows key similarities between the two emperors portrayed in these works of art, especially in terms of their physiognomies, hair styles, and types of crown (Fig. 15.15).[88] In other words, based on portrait type, Constantine VII appears to be as viable a possibility as Leo VI.[89] More importantly, however, if the patrons of the mosaic over the Imperial Door intended to have the prostrate figure recognised as a specific ruler, presumably he would have been identified by inscription.

Oikonomidès' connection of the emperor in *proskynesis* with Leo VI's humiliation during the Tetragamy Crisis continues to shape scholarly discussion. Yet, even if these events informed the range of references that the mosaic claimed, the church of Hagia Sophia was a space where the emperor and the patriarch needed, whenever possible, to appear in harmony, representing the symbolic unity of patriarchal and imperial power. Given this, the imagery decorating the building's walls would not have sought *a priori* to create tensions between these leaders or the segments of society that they represented. Rather, imagery in the Great Church was most effective if it served the interests of both groups, and if it did so in perpetuity. With this guiding principle in mind, it is more productive to ask not which specific emperor the mosaic over the Imperial Door portrays, nor whether it represents an act of imperial or patriarchal patronage, but instead to consider how this mosaic served the mutual interests and shared authority of all emperors and patriarchs, and could be seen as a product of patronage that they would have mutually approved, if not facilitated. In other words, while the prostrate figure in the mosaic over the Imperial Door resonates with portrait types from the reigns of Leo VI and Constantine VII, the intent seems to be to depict a perennial image of the emperor's role and nature rather than a portrait of a specific historical personage or the particular circumstances of his reign.

From this understanding of the 'who', we can turn to the 'why'. Scholarly consensus holds that, when completed in the sixth century, Hagia Sophia had no figural mosaics.[90] In the post-Iconoclastic era, figural imagery was added to prominent locations around the interior of the church, most likely during a period from the late ninth century through the first half of the tenth century. The mosaics over the Beautiful and Imperial Doors highlighted liminal zones, marking points of passage from imperial authority to ecclesiastical authority, and from profane space to increasingly sacred space. Furthermore, these imperial images were in dialogue with the mosaic of the enthroned Virgin Mary and Christ Child in the

semi-dome over the altar, the ultimate transitional zone from the earthly to divine spheres, where the liturgy culminated in the mystery of transubstantiation. The addition of mosaics at each of these physical junctures made more legible to the audience of lay and clerical viewers alike the processes of transformation and transcendence that the building facilitated and that served the interests of both patriarch and emperor, or indeed bound their interests together.

The ideas that these images promote – specifically the affirmation of the exceptional ontological status of the emperor – suggest their addition to the building in a period when there was a desire to assert, or perhaps recuperate, the emperor's privileged position in relation to Christ and the Virgin. Such an effort may have been especially meaningful during the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos, who would have been motivated to mend the imperial reputation during the years following the final resolution of the Tetragamy Crisis in 920. Yet such concerns may have lingered into the reign of Constantine VII, whose own right to rule was dependent on the resolution of that scandal, and who also would have been invested in reestablishing the exceptional nature of true imperial power after the period of gentle usurpation orchestrated by his father-in-law.[91] Either Romanos I or Constantine VII may have chosen to portray an imperial figure in terms that echoed the appearance of Leo VI because in different ways, Leo's legitimacy and the preservation of his reputation was a prerequisite for their own authority.

To the extent that the figural mosaics along imperial processional routes through Hagia Sophia reify ideas about the transcendent power of the Great Church and the transformation in status of the emperor who moved through the building, they might be understood to serve a purpose similar to the *Book of Ceremonies*, which was composed during the reign of Constantine VII. Both the mosaics and the text structured ceremonial practices and marked and recorded their observance. The mosaics served as signposts within the previously undifferentiated space of Hagia Sophia and created a more legible sequence of ontological transitions. The *Book of Ceremonies* laid out the proper order of imperial ceremonial, making its observance more sustainable and perceptible both to its audience and participants. By structuring ritual practices and making them more comprehensible for those who performed and observed them, the imperial mosaics in the vestibule and narthex and the *Book of Ceremonies* bespeak a mid-tenth-century concern for a social and ceremonial 'graphein', a writing and drawing, an inscribing in physical, legible forms, an orchestration and performance of social and cosmic power.[92] This earthly and otherworldly power was realised through the careful articulation and observance of categories and boundaries, but it was also realised through a mingling of categories and a crossing of boundaries. It was this breaking of *taxis* that defined the unique nature and authority of Christ, the Virgin, and the emperor. Any disruption of social and cosmic order was a delicate undertaking as it threatened the real and symbolic systems on which Byzantine imperial authority depended. Hagia Sophia created a space in which such risks could be taken with a measure of confidence because the church generated an otherworldly setting in which the usual order could be temporally undone and securely reestablished.



Figure 15.1 Imperial Door, narthex, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo



Figure 15.2 Mosaic over the Imperial Door, narthex, Hagia Sophia, tenth century (?), Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: Alicia Walker

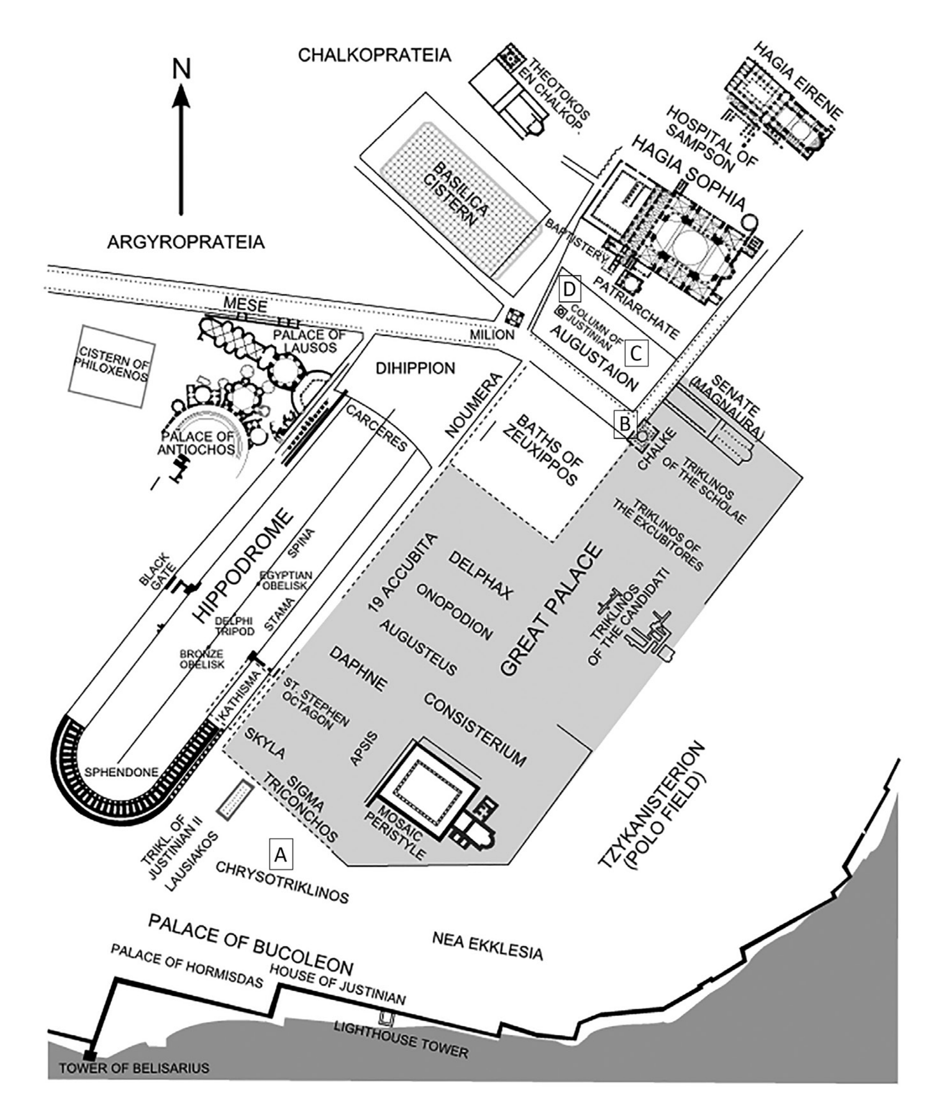


Figure 15.3 Hypothetical plan of the Great Palace, Constantinople. © 2018 Cplakidas. Image in the public domain

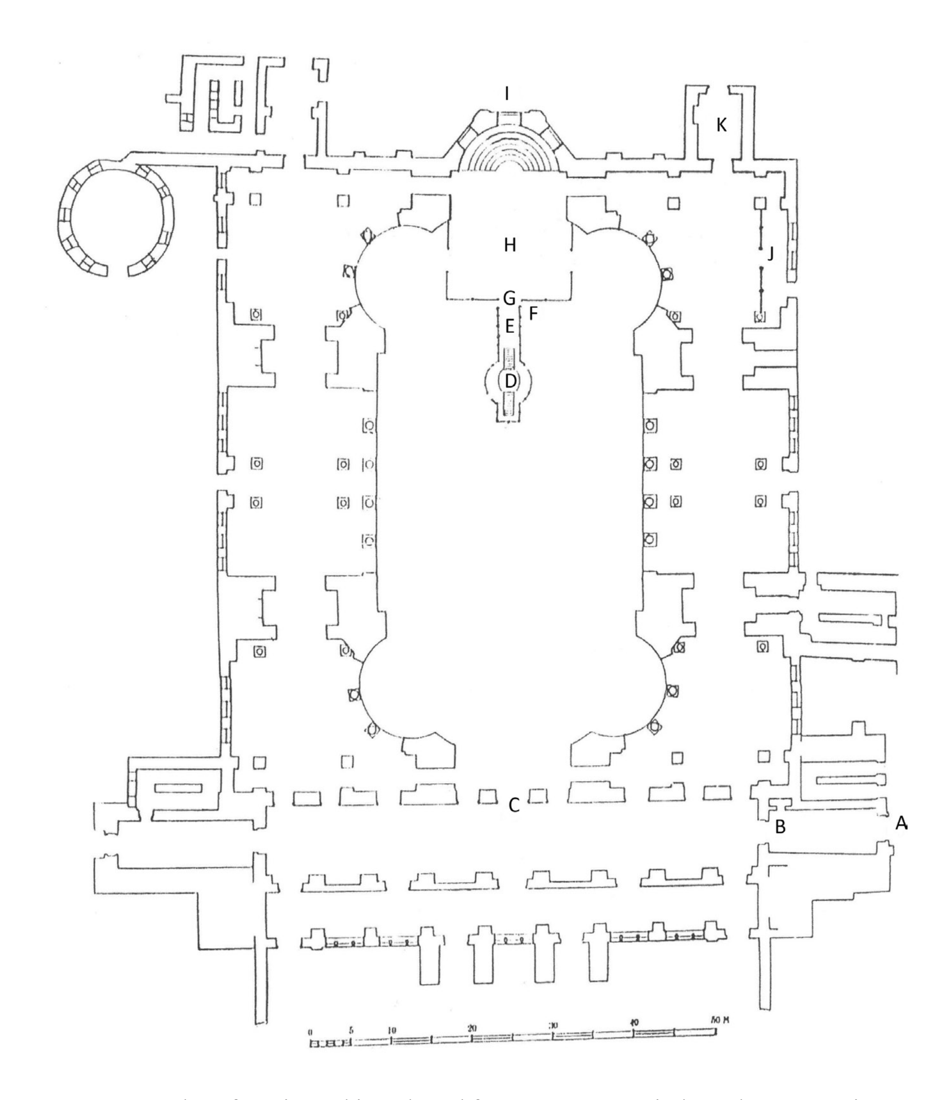


Figure 15.4 Plan of Hagia Sophia. Adapted from George P. Majeska, 'The emperor in his church: Imperial ritual in the church of St. Sophia', in Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, DC, 1997): 1–11, p. 5, fig. 1

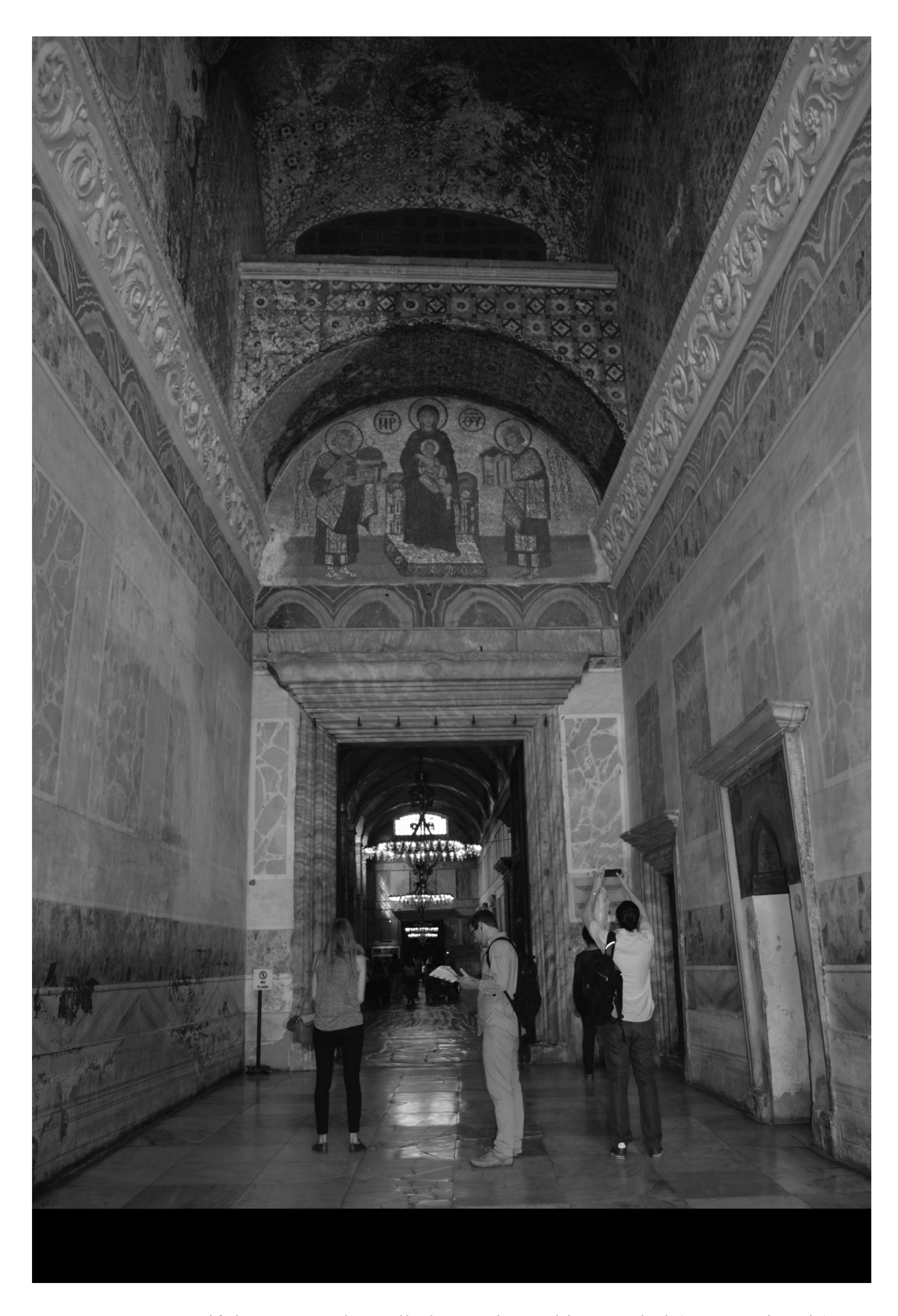


Figure 15.5 Beautiful Door, south vestibule, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (Constantinople). Photo: Alicia Walker



Figure 15.6 Emperors Constantine I and Justinian I presenting a model of Hagia Sophia and the walls of Constantinople to the Virgin and Child, mosaic, ninth or tenth century (?), south vestibule, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo



Figure 15.7 Mosaic of the Virgin enthroned with Christ, semi dome of the apse, *c.* 867, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). © Vanni Archive/Art Resource, NY

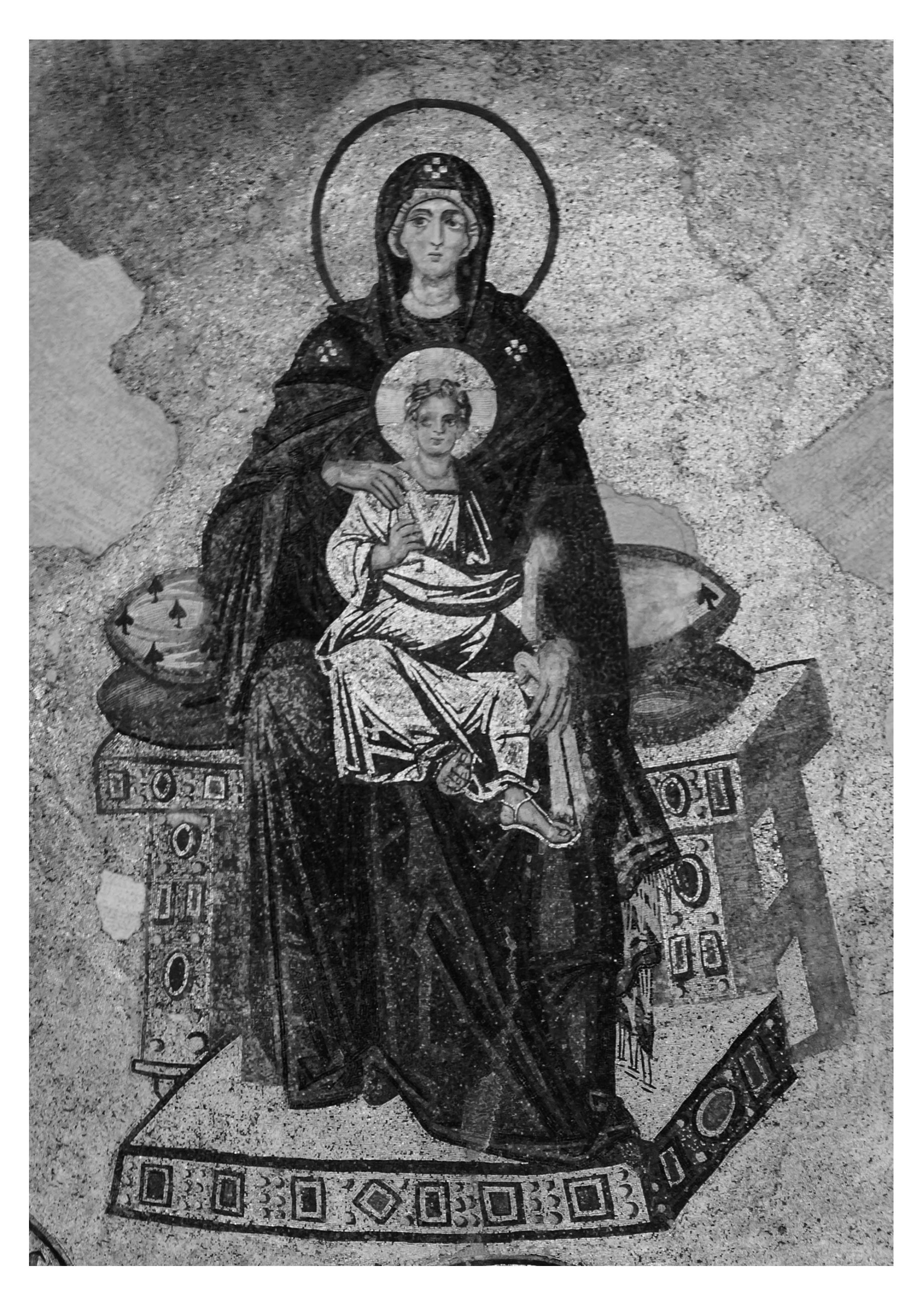


Figure 15.8 Virgin enthroned with Christ, *c.* 867, mosaic, semi dome of the apse, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: The Picture Art Collection/Alamy Stock Photo



Figure 15.9 Mosaics of the Virgin enthroned with Christ and an archangel, semi dome and soffit of the arch over the apse, *c.* 867, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: José Palanca/Alamy Stock Photo

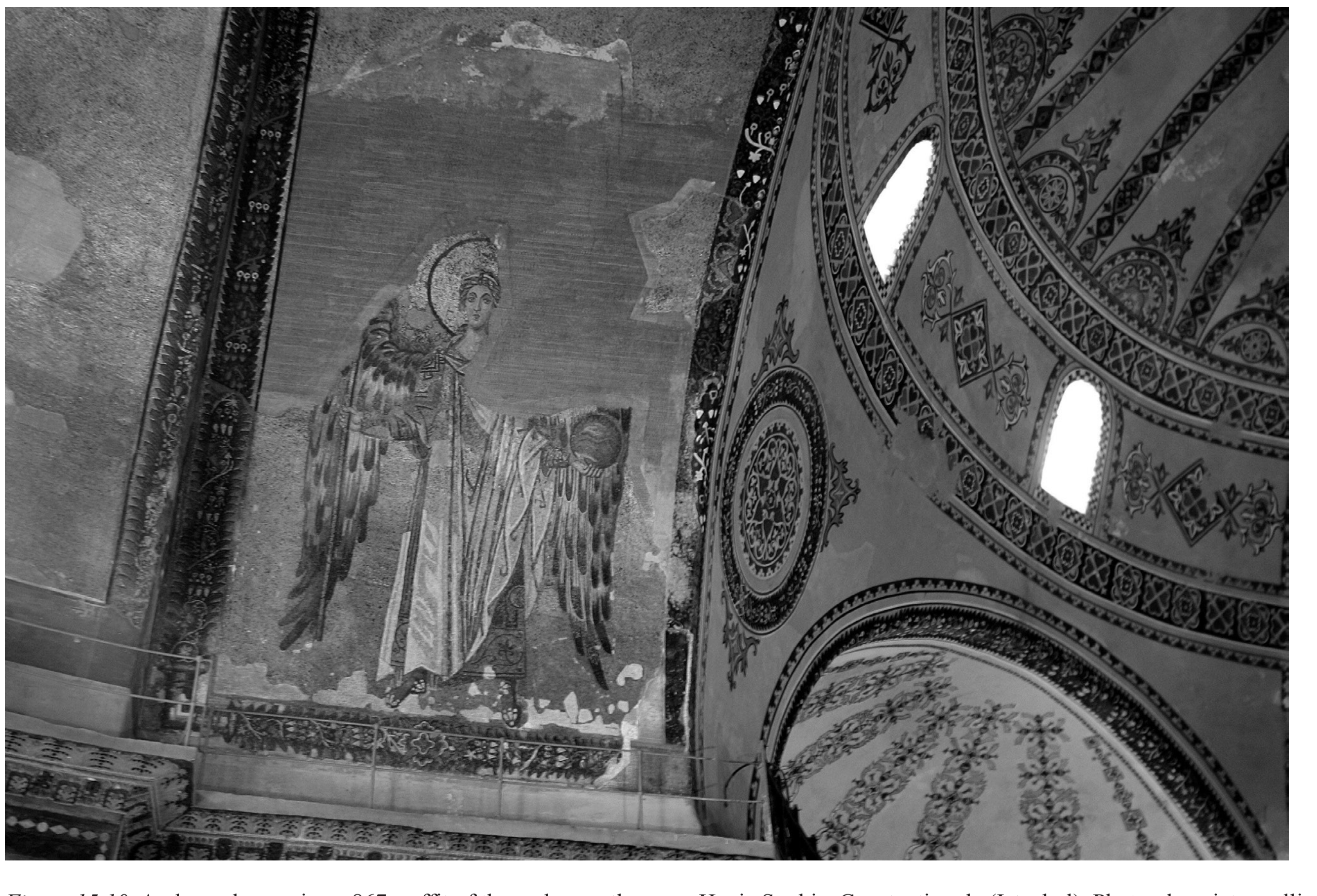


Figure 15.10 Archangel, mosaic, *c.* 867, soffit of the arch over the apse, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: dpa picture alliance archive/Alamy Stock Photo

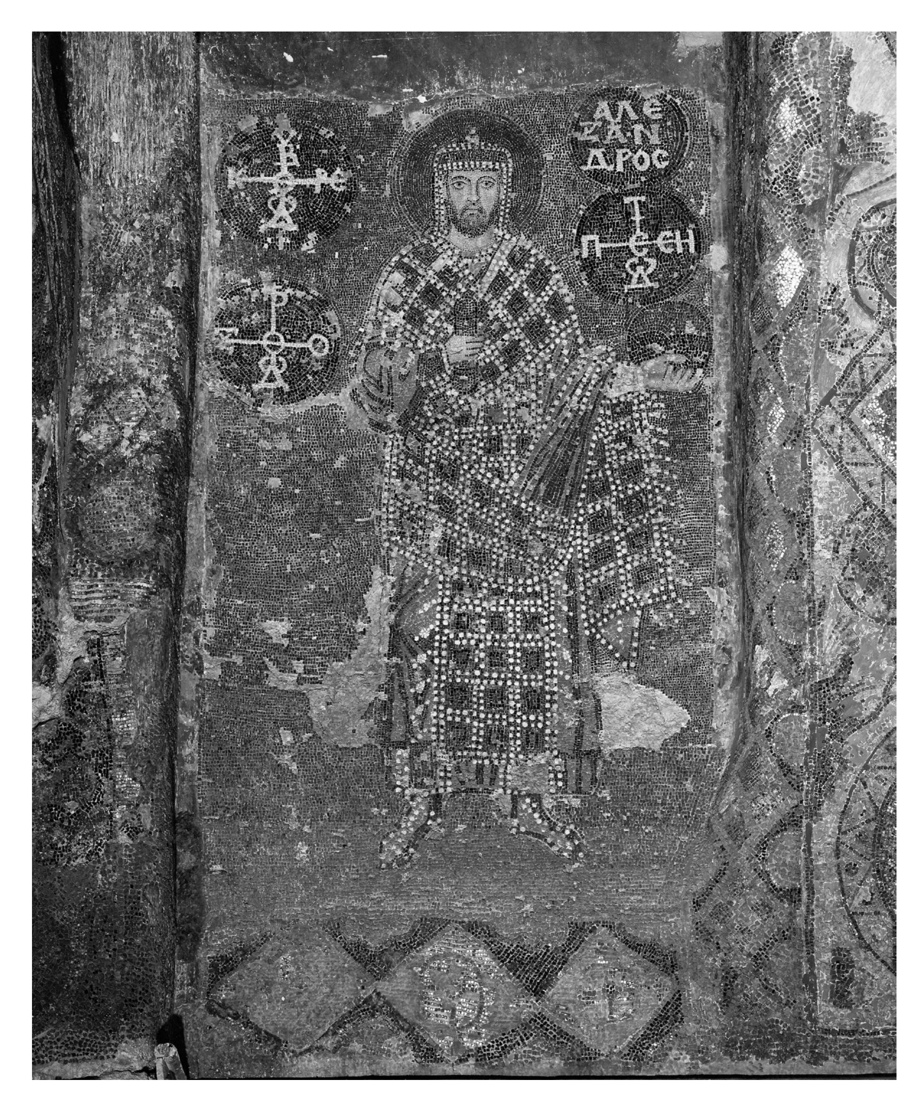


Figure 15.11 Emperor Alexander I (r. 912–913), mosaic, 908 or 912–913, north gallery, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resources, NY



Figure 15.12 Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1054) and empress Zoe, mosaic, 1040s, southeast gallery, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resources, NY

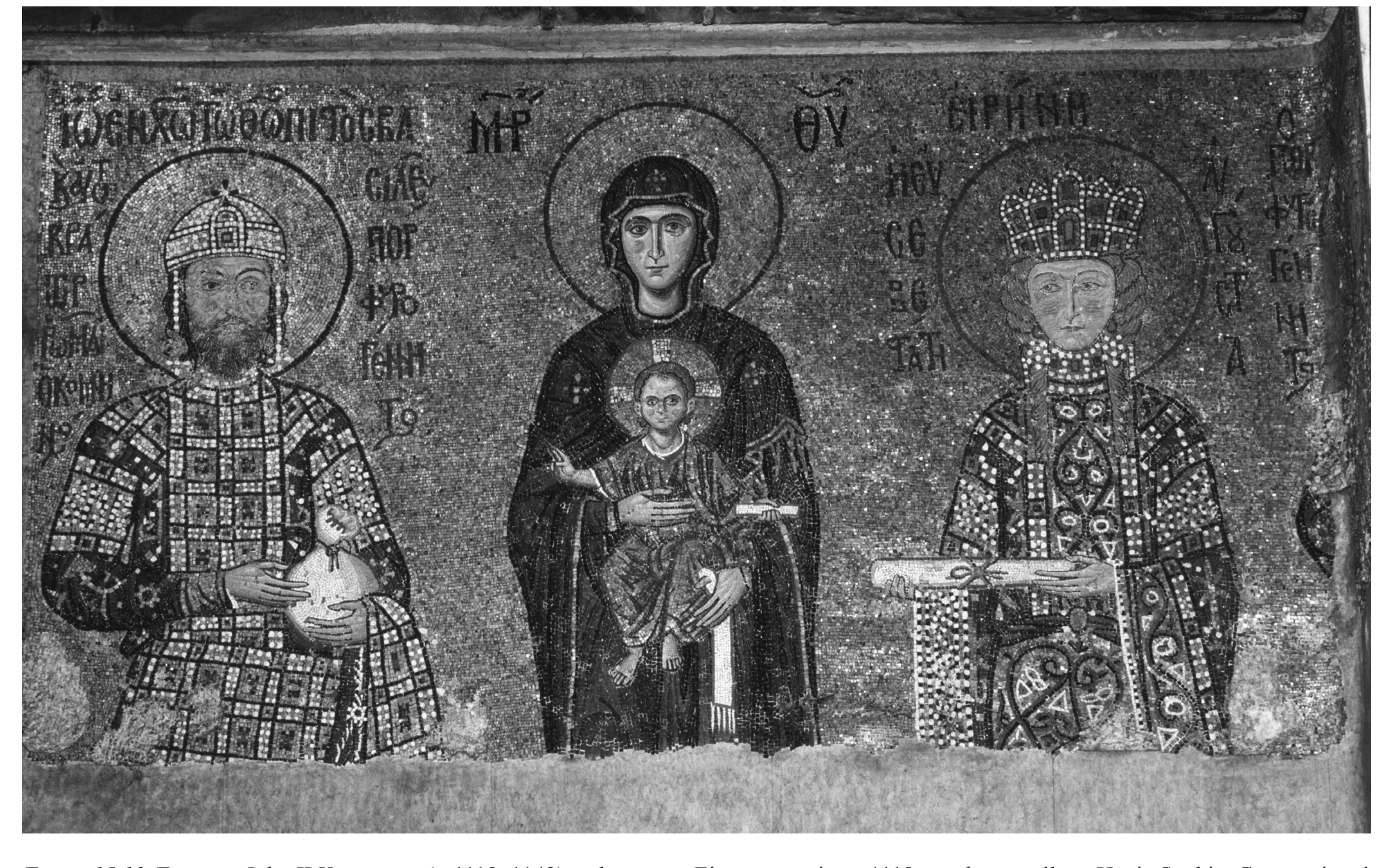


Figure 15.13 Emperor John II Komnenos (r. 1118–1143) and empress Eirene, mosaic, *c.* 1118, southeast gallery, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

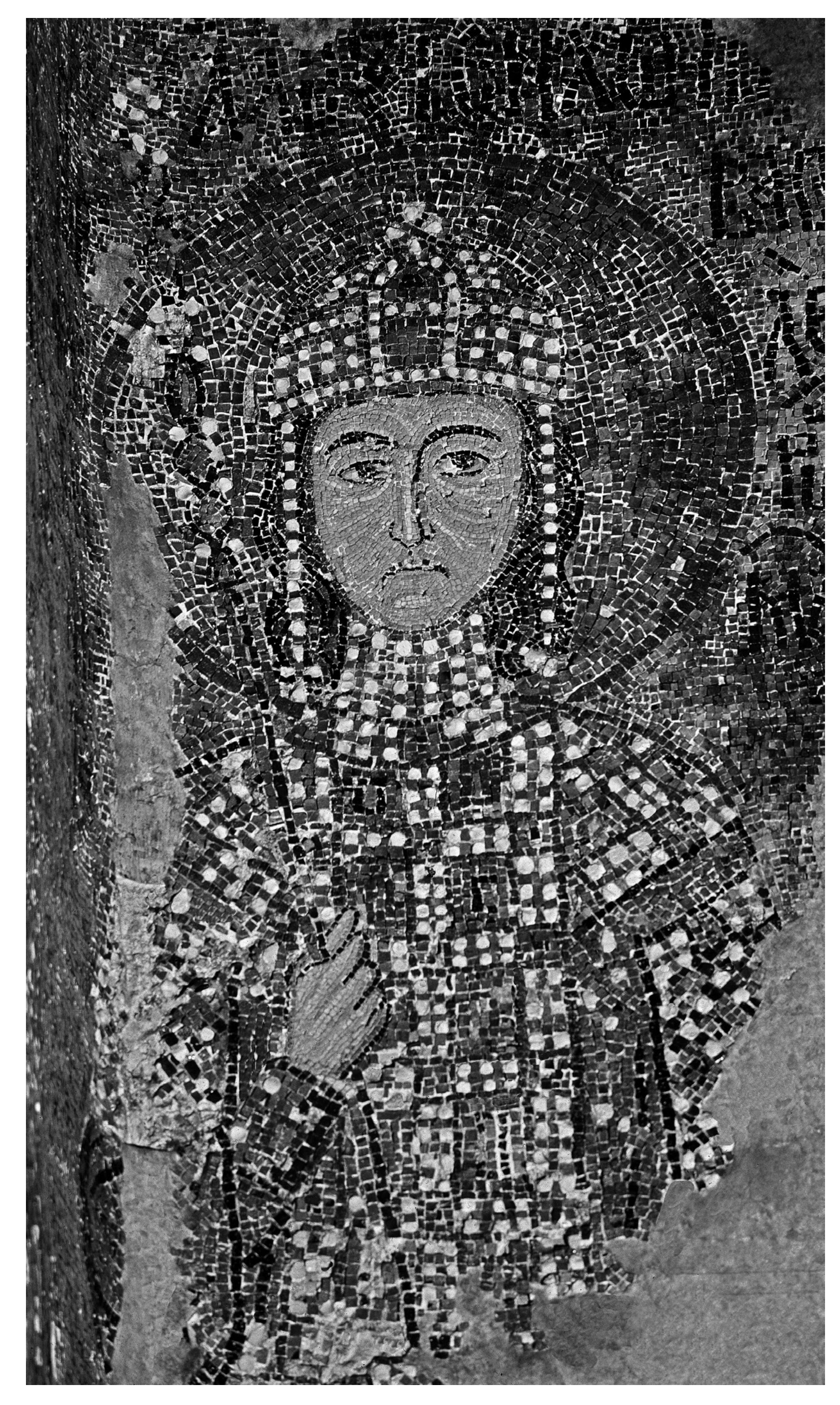


Figure 15.14 Emperor Alexios (eldest son of John II and Eirene), mosaic, *c.* 1122, southeast gallery, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul). Photo: Album/Art Resource, NY

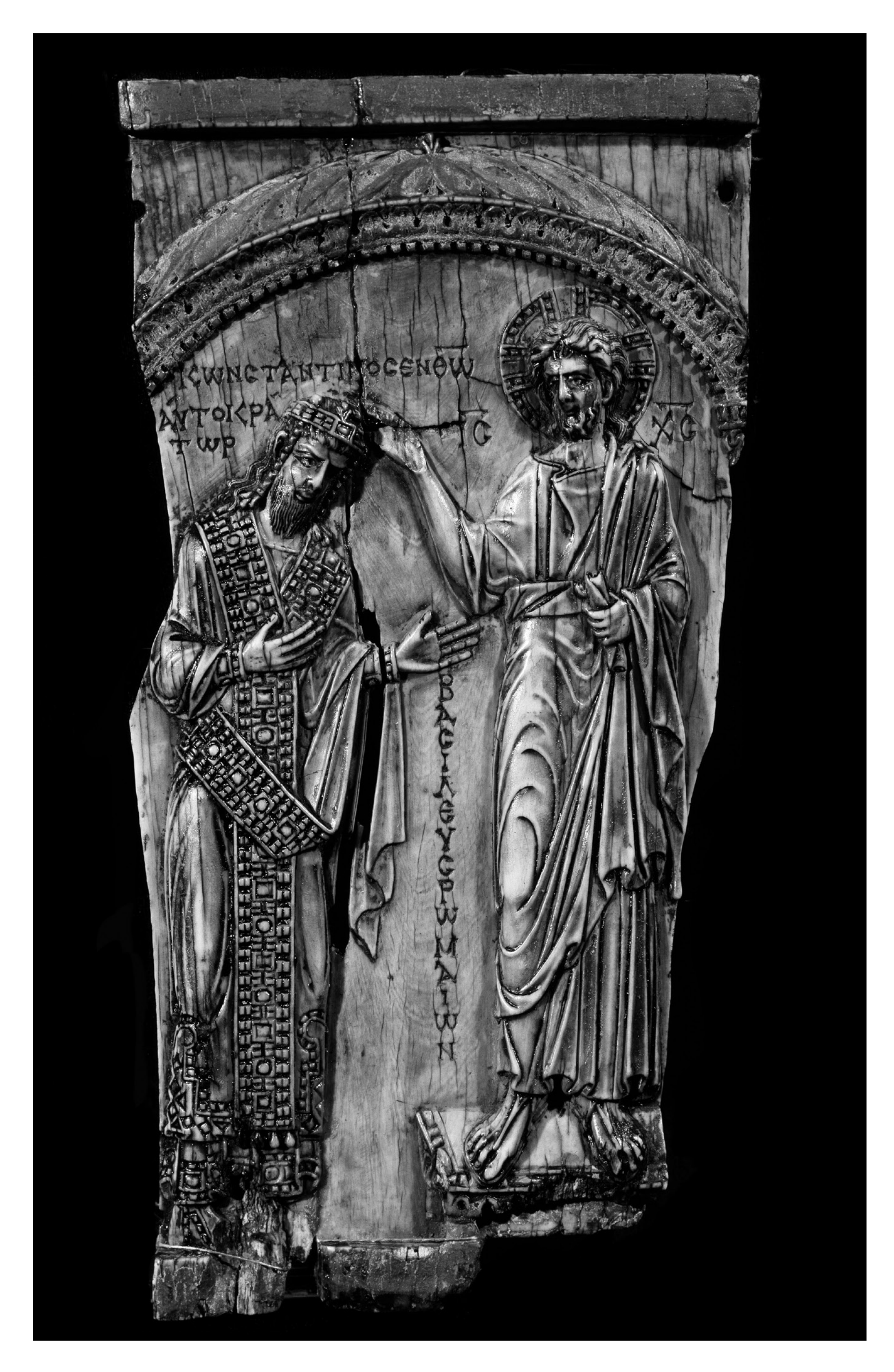


Figure 15.15 Plaque depicting Christ crowning Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 913–959), ivory, mid-tenth century, *c.* 19 x 10 cm, State Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia, II 2 b 329. Photo: HIP/Art Resource, NY

Notes

1 I am grateful to Amanda Luyster, Naomi Pitamber, Shaun Tougher, and the anonymous reader, each of whom contributed substantially to the improvement of this chapter.

2 These mosaics were painstakingly conserved and documented following their rediscovery in the early twentieth century. Regarding this effort, see Whittemore 1933–52. Also see Mango 1962. For reassessment of the mosaic programme at Hagia Sophia, see Cormack 1981, and additional bibliography noted below.

3 Regarding the sixth-century phase of Hagia Sophia, see Mainstone 1988: esp. 185–235.

4 For discussion of Hagia Sophia as a centre and symbol of imperial authority throughout and beyond the Byzantine era, see Mark and Çakmak 1992; Nelson 2004.

5 Constantine Porphyrogennetos' *Book of Ceremonies* is translated by Moffat and Tall 2012. This translation includes a reprint of the modern edition of the text by Reiske and Leich 1829–30. On the nature and purpose of the *Book of Ceremonies*, see especially McCormick 1985; Cameron 1987; the essays collected in *TM* 13, 2000; Holmes 2010. See also the contribution by Prerona Prasad in this volume (Chapter 12).

6 The *Book of Ceremonies* does not mention any of the monumental works of art in Hagia Sophia. However, their absence should not be taken as an indication that the decorations were not present at the time of the compilation of the text. Even the apse mosaic depicting the Virgin Mary, which is described in a homily dating to 867, is not acknowledged in the *Book of Ceremonies*.

7 Regarding the concept of *taxis* and its essential role in the Byzantine world view, see Ahrweiler 1975: 129–147; the entry on 'Taxis' by Michael McCormick in *ODB*, vol. 3: 2018.

8 For a notable exception to this tendency, see Lidov 2004.

9 For discussion of this idea, see James 2004.

10 I evoke here Trilling 1998.

11 On this point, see Nelson 2000: esp. 1–10.

12 Now a commonplace in art history and related disciplines, the phrase 'period eye' originated in Baxandall 1972: 29–108.

13 On this point, see especially James 2004.

14 Photios, *Homily* 10, trans. Mango 1958: 186.

15 Regarding the aesthetics of Hagia Sophia, see Webb 1999; Pentcheva 2011; Schibille 2014.

16 *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953: 111; ed. Karsky 1926–28: col. 107. The manuscript on which the edition and translation are based is available in an online facsimile: expositions.nlr.ru/LaurentianCodex/ (accessed 30 September 2016). The Rus'ian account also notes that the emperor and patriarch conspired to present a captivating performance for the delegation by burning incense, singing hymns, donning sacerdotal robes, and assembling the full ecclesiastical retinue. The emperor accompanied the delegation, serving as their personal guide around the Great Church and providing them with impressive gifts upon their departure. The *Chronicle* evinces how the awe-inspiring spectacle of Byzantine liturgical ceremonial was a powerful tool that the patriarch and emperor skillfully deployed to potent and precise effect.

17 James 2004: 525.

18 Regarding the pose of *proskynesis* in Byzantine art and ritual, see Spatharakis 1974: 190–205; Cutler 1975: 53–91 (both of whom summarise the earlier bibliography); and Vojvodić 2010, who cites additional depictions of *proskynesis* in Byzantine art not noted by Spatharakis and Cutler.

19 For a detailed account of the emperor's garments, see Hawkins 1968: 162–163.

20 Typically, two categories of evidence are cited to date the tympanum mosaic: style and the identity of the imperial figure. The style of the mosaic over the Imperial Door is often

compared to other mosaics in the building that date to the late ninth century, such as that of the archangel Gabriel in the arch leading to the apse. As Cormack 1981: 138–141, notes, however, the body of comparative material for the mosaic over the Imperial Door is extremely limited, casting doubt over any argument that relies too heavily on stylistic evidence. A thorough reanalysis of the style of the mosaic is needed, including careful consideration of how reliable such evidence can be for dating the work. This task is, however, beyond the scope of the present chapter. Theories regarding the identity of the emperor are stymied by the fact that the figure is not named by inscription. From the time of the rediscovery of the mosaic, Whittemore 1938: 220, associated the imperial figure with Leo VI (886–912), perceiving affinity with imperial portraits of his reign. Mango 1962: 96–97, further supported this identification; he asserted that the figure must represent a *ktetor* (founder) of the building and marshalled evidence for Leo VI's additions to the church. Brubaker 2010: 60, also endorsed the identification of the figure as Leo VI, but emphasised that the absence of identifying inscriptions makes the image 'about the emperor as an institution . . . not about any particular living emperor as a donor'. Like Brubaker, I interpret the absence of identifying inscriptions as an indication that the patron(s) of the mosaic wished the image to represent not a particular emperor but rather a perennial image of imperial authority.

21 Grabar 1936: 100–106. Also see Gavrilović 1979; Cormack 2000: 114, 116. Regarding the association of the figure with the portrait type of Leo VI, see n.20, above.

22 Grabar 1936: 101, proposed that the figure's pose simply mirrored ritual observance of triple *proskynesis* performed by the emperor at this location in the course of the imperial liturgy as recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies*.

23 Oikonomidès 1976. Oikonomidès' interpretation has become deeply rooted in the scholarship and continues to be endorsed today. See, for instance, Dagron 2003a: 114–124. Lidov 2004 supports Oikonomidès' association of the image with imperial penance, but proposes a different date and motivation for the installation of the mosaic. He sees it instead as continuing themes of repentance and divine forgiveness that feature in two important icons that were brought to Hagia Sophia by Leo VI and hung on either side of the Imperial Door; he proposes that Leo VI installed the mosaic during his lifetime.

24 These events are recounted in the life of patriarch Euthymios; see Karlin-Hayter 1970: 73–78. Also see Tougher 1997: 152–163.

25 Oikonomidès 1976: 170–172; the entries by Alexander Kazhdan on 'Tetragamy of Leo VI' and 'Tomos of Union' in *ODB*, vol. 3: 2027 and 2093.

26 *Vita Euthymii* 76–77, ll. 25–31; Oikonomidès 1976: 164.

27 Oikonomidès 1976: 170–172.

28 This range of possibilities is surveyed by Cutler 1975: 53–91.

29 Scholars who have raised doubt about Oikonomidès' reading of this image as one of imperial subjugation under patriarchal authority include Cormack 1981: 139–141, and 1994: 245–251; Brubaker 2010: 50–51, 55–57; Gavrilović 1979.

30 My interpretation of the emperor's status as a liminal figure who acts as a hinge between the courts of heaven and earth is indebted to Henry Maguire, who has articulated the emperor's unique ability to move between the 'interpenetrating' hierarchies of the earthly and heavenly courts and has drawn attention to the conception of the emperor in Byzantine art and texts as Christ-like in the sense that he possessed an ambiguous nature that vacillates between human and divine qualities: Maguire 1989: 224–229, and 1997. Also see Woodfin 2010. My argument is distinguished from these studies, however, by the degree to which it correlates imperial iconography with imperial ceremonial, and for the way in which it shows how ideas of the emperor's unique status were amplified through his physical juxtaposition with prominent public images in Hagia Sophia that expressed the ineffable, *taxis*-defying qualities of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

31 With respect to an understanding of the middle Byzantine emperor's priest-like status, my study has benefitted from the foundational work of Dagron 1996, trans. 2003a. As outlined further below, I differ from Dagron, however, regarding the ecclesiastical implications for imperial authority generated through the liturgy at Hagia Sophia and in my interpretation of the imperial-ecclesiastical power dynamic established by the narthex mosaic at the Great Church.

32 Regarding the rigidly stratified and highly competitive nature of middle Byzantine society – as well as the possibility for social mobility that these conditions generated – see Kazhdan and McCormick 1997; Magdalino 2009.

33 With respect to the possibility that contemporary viewers may have seen the imperial figure's pose as one that simultaneously evoked imperial penance (and redemption) as well as honour, I endorse the argument of Cutler 1975: 66, that *proskynesis* could be employed as a 'compound image', that intentionally drew from and productively merged more than one category of associations. A similar opinion has been voiced by Kähler and Mango 1967: 54, who note that 'it is characteristic of Byzantine sacred iconography that it should admit various overtones of interpretation . . . the primary meaning of the mosaic . . . need not be its only meaning'. Indeed, as Lidov 2004 has argued, an imperial capacity for penance and redemption need not have been associated with a specific historical event and instead could be promoted as an abiding imperial virtue.

34 In this regard, my interpretation resonates with that of Brubaker 2010: 60, who posits that the mosaic over the Imperial Door should be understood as a 'generic' statement of imperial ideology 'rather than a direct response to an immediately pressing historical circumstance'. In addition, I agree with Brubaker 2010: 60, who emphasises the deep significance of the main portals of Hagia Sophia to the symbolic meaning of the imperial liturgy: 'the Imperial Door in the narthex and the Beautiful Door in the vestibule were imperial ceremonial spaces: sites of transition, transaction and of super-personal imperial identity'.

35 The *Book of Ceremonies* was the product of compilation and revision over time with the result that the chronology of different sections of the text is varied and complex. However, the chapters of the manual that I analyse here are dated to Constantine VII's reign. Furthermore, they show evidence of updating, which supports the view that they reflect imperial rituals as they were practised in the mid-tenth century. For the dating of the *Book of Ceremonies*, see Bury 1907; Featherstone 2004; Moffat and Tall 2012: xxv–xxvi.

36 *De cer.* 1, Preface, trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012: 3–5. See also Chapter 12 by Prerona Prasad in this volume.

37 On the Chrysotriklinos, see Dagron 2003b; Featherstone 2005.

38 *Greek Anthology*, ed. trans. Waltz 1960, vol. 1: 106; Mango 1986: 184.

39 *De cer.* 1.1.7: ἡ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ θεοῦ θεοείκελος ἁγία εἰκὼν ἐπὶ θρόνου καθεζομένη, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 7, who amend 'θεοείκελος' ('godlike') to 'θεανδρείκελος' ('as both God and man').

40 The eight points at which the emperor performs *proskynesis* are as follows: in the church of the Theotokos – referred to as 'the first founded' (τῳ πρωτοκτίστῳ ναῷ) – where he received candles from the *praipositoi* and then made triple *proskynesis* in thanks to God: *De cer.* 1.1.7 and 1.1.8, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 7–8. In the adjoining chapel of the Holy Trinity the emperor performed triple *proskynesis* two times: in the sanctuary and again in front of the relics kept there: *De cer.* 1.1.8, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 8. Subsequently he entered the church of St. Stephen and made triple *proskynesis* in the sanctuary and then *proskynesis* again in front of the cross of Constantine: *De cer.* 1.1.8 and 1.1.9, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 8–9. After passing into the First Schole (the Old Mint) the emperor made triple *proskynesis* before 'a

very beautiful cross made of silver' (ὁ ἐξ ἀργύρου κατεσκευασμένος περικαλλὴς σταυρὸς): *De cer.* 1.1.11, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 11. Subsequently, in 'the Lamps', the emperor made triple *proskynesis* before another silver cross: *De cer.* 1.1.12, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 12. Finally, at the entrance to the church of the Holy Apostles, the emperor again performed triple *proskynesis: De cer.* 1.1.13, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 13.

41 These three moments are as follows: After the initial imperial prayer was completed before the image of Christ in the Chrysotriklinos, the first set of courtiers to greet the emperor, the *praipositoi*, made *proskynesis* to him: *De cer.* 1.1.7, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 7. After the emperor donned his regalia and proceeded to the hall of the Augousteus, the '*magistroi*, proconsuls, patricians, *strategoi*, holders of high office, and frontier commanders' made *proskynesis* before him: *De cer.* 1.1.10, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 10. Then the emperor and his entourage continue to the Onopodion, at which location 'the *droungarios* of the Watch and the *droungarios* of the fleet' and 'the imperial *spatharioi* . . . the *magistroi* and the rest fall down in obeisance [πίπτουσι] there': *De cer.* 1.1.10, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 10.

42 The *Book of Ceremonies* does not mention the image of Christ Chalkites that was positioned above the gate. This icon played an important role in the Iconoclastic controversy, being removed and reinstated as the imperial and patriarchal position vacillated. On this image and the building it adorned, see Mango 1959: 108–142 and 170–174.

43 *De cer.* 1.1.14, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 14. Regarding the Augustaion, see Mango 1959: 42–47. On the columnar statue of Justinian, see now Boeck 2014.

44 *De cer.* 1.1.14, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 14.

45 In the initial publication of this mosaic after its rediscovery, Whittemore 1933–52, vol. 2: 30–31, attributed the work to the late tenth century based on comparison with comparable images in other media as well as palaeographic analysis. However, as Brubaker has documented, the basis of Whittemore's attribution is debatable, if not incorrect. Synthesising the piecemeal evidence that other scholars have noted regarding the date of the mosaic, she dates it to the first half of the tenth century based on several factors, including that: the title 'Mother of God' for the Virgin Mary first appeared in conjunction with imperial images on coins of Leo VI, and the boldness of the inscription in the mosaic suggests it may correspond chronologically with the public, numismatic advent of that terminology; the phrases used to characterise Constantine and Justinian in the inscriptions are also attested in the mid-tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies*; the type of *loros* worn by the two emperors parallels the form found in coins of the late ninth- to mid-tenth century; and some technical details (including the angled placement of the tesserae and the compensation for optical distortion in the proportions of the figures) suggest a late ninth- or early tenth-century date, while the placement of the tesserae for the halos in a predominantly linear arrangement suggests a date in the first half of the tenth century. Brubaker raises the possibility that the mosaic over the Beautiful Door was commissioned by Constantine VII, suggesting that it post-dates the mosaic over the Imperial Door, which she associates with the patronage of Leo VI. See Brubaker 2010: 42–43, 46–52, and 60–61. It must be emphasised, however, that the sequence of the mosaics over the Imperial and Beautiful Doors is uncertain.

46 For recent discussion of these mosaics, see Brubaker 2010: 43–55 and 58–61.

47 Regarding apse mosaic and suggestions for its relationship to the liturgy and the patriarch's appearance within these rituals, see Teteriatnikov 2004–2005.

48 In drawing a connection between the Beautiful and Imperial Doors, I follow the lead of Brubaker 2010: 59, who states 'it is increasingly clear that we need to consider the Imperial Door in the narthex and the Beautiful Door in the vestibule as pendants to each other, made at different times but working together to present a

coherent message'. Brubaker also emphasises the 'transactional' nature of the ritual activities that surrounded these two images and the 'liminal' nature of the doors (and vestibules) themselves.

49 During the imperial coronation ceremony, however, the crown and *chlamys* were bestowed upon the emperor at the ambo, with the result that, on this occasion, the emperor wore his full regalia within the church: *De cer.* 1.38.192–193, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 192–193.

50 *De cer.* 1.1.14, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 14.

51 Majeska 1997: 7.

52 *De cer.* 1.1.14, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 14.

53 See n.40 and n.41 above.

54 *De cer.* 1.1.10, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 10.

55 A point discussed by Cutler 1975: 67–80 and 91–100. Cutler 1975: 80–91, separately considers *proskynesis* in scenes of 'entreaty, penitence, and prayer'.

56 Barber 1993: 14. Barber 1993: 15, emphasises, however, that this is only a 'projection' of 'unmediated presence', a point made clear when the emperor performed *proskynesis* beneath the mosaic during the imperial liturgy: 'The presence of the emperor below would emphasize his absence from the icon above, marking this as a depiction rather than a re-presentation of something wholly absent'.

57 On this point, see Maguire 1989: 224–228.

58 *De cer.* 1.1.7, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 7. See n.31 above.

59 Breckenridge 1980–1981. This iconographic type was also employed widely in Macedonian-era coinage, solidifying its association with this dynasty. For the numismatic evidence, see Grierson 1973, vol. 3: 154–158. For the argument in favour of seeing a visually orchestrated parallel between the Chrysotriklinos and the tympanum over the Imperial Door, also see Lidov 2004.

60 Photios, *Homily* 17: Παρθένος μήτηρ ἁγναῖς ἀγκάλαις τὸν κοινὸν φέρουσα πλάστην εἰς κοινὴν τοῦ γένους σωτηρίαν ὡς βρέφος ἀνακλινόμενον, τὸ μέγα τοῦτο καὶ ἄφραστον τῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον. Παρθένος μήτηρ, παρθένον ἅμα καὶ μητρικὸν ὁρῶσα καὶ πρὸς ἄμφω τὰς σχέσεις ἐν ἀμερίστῳ σχήματι μεριζομένη τὸ βούλημα καὶ μηδέτερον μέρος τῷ ἀτελεῖ ἐξυβρίζουσα, ed. Laourda 1959: 167.7–12, trans. Mango 1958: 290; discussed by James 2004: 531.

61 James 2004: 533.

62 James 2004: 533.

63 Photios, *Homily* 17: Ἡ παρθένος τὸν κτίστην χερσὶν ὡς βρέφος βαστάζει. Τίς καθορῶν ἢ τοῖς ὠσὶ ταῦτα βαλλόμενος οὐ μᾶλλον καταπλαγείη τοῦ μυστηρίου τὸ μέγεθος καὶ πρὸς ὕμνον διαvασταίη τῆς ἀφάτου καὶ λόγους πάντας νικώσης συγκαταβάσεως;, ed. Laourda 1959: 170.24–28, trans. Mango 1958: 294.

64 For discussion of the archangels' iconography as indicative of their overlapping roles in the heavenly and earthly courts, see Maguire 1989: 222–224, and 1997: 250 and 255–258.

65 Another potent visual juxtaposition may have been orchestrated as the emperor passed through the Imperial Door into the naos. As early as 1200, Russian sources attest to an image of Christ Chalkites on the western wall of the naos in the space above the Imperial Door: Majeska 1971, and 1984: 28–29, 130–131, 210–212. Presumably this depiction repeated the iconographic type that appeared above the Chalke Gate (the aforementioned ceremonial portal of the imperial palace). Neither image survives today, and the date at which the Christ Chalkites was added to the decorative programme of the Great Church is unknown. Majeska 1971: 293, proposes that the Chalke image probably was added to Hagia Sophia in 843, after the second period of iconoclasm. Lidov 2004 suggests that it could have been installed during the late ninth- to mid-tenth century, in the same period during which other figural decorations were introduced to the building. In any case, by 1200, if not earlier, through the repetition of the Christ Chalkites at key

portals of the imperial palace and the Great Church, these spaces were bound together. As the emperor walked into the naos and beneath the icon of Christ Chalkites, the audience already within the naos witnessed a ritual tableau echoing his earlier passage through the Chalke Gate of the palace. Each portal marked a potent transition between qualitatively different spaces: in the case of the Chalke Gate, from the explicitly imperial zone of the palace into the semi-public zone of the Augustaion; in the case of the Imperial Door, from the semi-profane zone of the narthex into the explicitly sacred zone of the naos. In addition, the juxtaposition of the emperor with an image of Christ above each door resonated with the visual parallel staged between Christ and the emperor in the Chrysotriklinos when the emperor assumed his seat beneath the image of Christ enthroned.

66 Majeska 1997: 2, begins his analysis at the point when the emperor arrives at the church. I reach a different conclusion regarding the underlying message of the ritual performances at Hagia Sophia by attending to the fact that the *Book of Ceremonies* recounts each procession as commencing in the palace at the Chrysotriklinos.

67 Majeska 1997: 5–9. Majeska observes that the imperial coronation ceremony, as prescribed in the *Book of Ceremonies* and the *Euchologion* of the Great Church (the latter of which draws from manuscripts dating as early as the late eighth century), also casts the emperor in semi-ecclesiastical terms. Aspects of the ritual immediately recalled the ordination ceremony of individuals entering holy orders. In particular, both the coronation and ordination ceremonies transpired during the 'little' or 'first' entrance and were performed by the patriarch. Furthermore, the culminating actions of crowning and/or robing were localised at the ambo and accompanied by the acclamation 'Worthy!' (Ἄξιος!). Following the imperial vestment ceremony, the newly crowned emperor continued to perform actions that were normally reserved for members of the ecclesiastical orders: he participated in the second 'great entrance'; he was verbally commemorated by members of the clergy in the same way that they recognised the celebrating bishop or patriarch; he exchanged the kiss of peace with the patriarch; and he received the eucharist not as a typical layman would (with the wine and bread together on a spoon), but instead as a priest or deacon did (taking the bread in his hand from the patriarch and drinking directly from a chalice held by the patriarch). At the same time, the emperor was distinguished from members of the ecclesiastical orders in several respects: he took communion not within the sanctuary at the altar (a location reserved for the patriarch, bishops, priests, and deacons), but just outside the entrance to the sanctuary (in the area where the lower clergy received communion, although the lower clergy received communion combined, like laypeople). Majeska 1997: 2–4; *De cer.* 1.38, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 191–196; *Euchologion sive ritual graecorum*, ed. Goar 1960. Of particular note, the coronation ceremony ascribed to the emperor a special status among laymen, because he traversed the ceremonial categories that usually distinguished members of the holy orders. Still, he did not join these ecclesiastical ranks in a clear-cut way. Instead he occupied clerical ranks ambiguously, in a manner that disrupted their usual distinctions, but did not resolve into a clear assignment of clerical rank. The point of the coronation ceremony was not to align the emperor with the ordained, but rather to place him in a unique situation whereby his unresolved status imbued him with power because in an exceptional fashion, he superseded the normal categories of Byzantine social order.

68 *De cer.* 1.1.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 15. Subsequently it is noted that previously the emperor did not enter the sanctuary during the liturgy commemorating the Feast of Orthodoxy, but that 'now' he does. This suggests that changes in the emperor's role – which were recent enough for the compiler of the *Book of Ceremonies* to comment on their novelty – emphasised a clerical association by admitting the emperor to the sanctuary: *De cer.* 1.28.158–159, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 158–159.

69 *De cer.* 1.1.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 15.

70 *De cer.* 1.1.16, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 16.
71 Majeska 1997: 6–7.
72 *De cer.* 1.1.16–17, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 16–17; Majeska 1997: 7–9.
73 Majeska 1997: 7. The commemoration that the clergy say to one another as they enter the sanctuary is: ‘May the Lord God remember you in his kingdom.’ See Taft 1975: 241–242.
74 Majeska 1997: 7.
75 The absence of his crown can be understood to contribute to his ambiguous status at this juncture in the ceremony; by laying only partial claim to the insignia of his office, he occupies a liminal category between laity and clergy.
76 *De cer.* 1.1.17, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 17. A similar process is specified for the liturgy on Christmas day: *De cer.* 1.23.134, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 134.
77 Majeska 1997: 8.
78 *De cer.* 1.1.17–18, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 17.
79 *De cer.* 1.23.134–135, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 134–135; Majeska 1997: 8.
80 Majeska 1997: 8. Regarding the emperor’s semi-ecclesiastical identity during the liturgy at Hagia Sophia and the ritual of imperial communion, also see Taft 2001: 9–13 and 27.
81 Majeska 1997: 9.
82 Within the substantial body of scholarship on these mosaics, I highlight below recent studies that consider the social and historical significance of these mosaics in relation to the Great Church and the ecclesiastical and imperial authorities who gathered there.
83 As noted by Brubaker 2010: 39.
84 Four circles surround the figure and are inscribed with monograms or regular text; together they read: Κύριε Βο(ή)θει (τῷ σῷ) δού(λ)ῳ ὀρδοδόξῳ πιστῷ δεσπ(ό)τη (Lord, help your servant, the orthodox faithful emperor, Alexander). The date of this mosaic is debated. If understood as an imperial donation by Alexander himself, it would likely date between the death of Leo VI in 912 and Alexander’s own death in 913, a brief period during which Alexander was regent for Constantine VII. Teteriatnikov 2012 has proposed instead that it may have been a donation of Leo VI, who would have sought to downgrade his brother’s status (following the legitimisation of Constantine VII as the imperial heir) by depicting him in an obscure location. She dates the mosaic prior to Leo’s death, around the time of Constantine VII’s coronation as co-emperor in 908. Also see Underwood and Hawkins 1961.
85 On these mosaics, including discussion of the earlier scholarship on them, see especially Cormack 1994; Teteriatnikov 1996; Brubaker 2010: 37–39.
86 Brubaker 2010: 39; Teteriatnikov 2012: 70.
87 For example, see Whittemore 1938: 220; Mango 1962: 96–97; Brubaker 2010: 50.
88 Kalavrezou 1997 identifies the plaque as a commemorative gift to be distributed on the occasion of Constantine VII’s ascension to the throne. She notes that Constantine’s portrait resembles his depiction in coinage.
89 This suggestion contradicts the standard dating of the mosaic, which is based on a stylistic chronology for the mosaic over the Imperial Door and places it in the late ninth century (see n.20). As noted above, I am not persuaded by the conventional dating and believe the stylistic attribution is in need of reassessment.
90 Cormack 1981: 133–134.
91 See also the comments by Prerona Prasad in this volume (Chapter 12).
92 My argument here resonates with that of Holmes 2010: 60, who notes that compilation literature of tenth-century Byzantium – like the *Book of Ceremonies* – often states as a motivation for its composition the desire to make ideas and information easier to grasp.

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16

TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

The palace on the move[1]

Lynn Jones

Introduction

Modern scholarship defines Byzantine palaces by architecture, the type of events held within the walls, and the (however occasional) presence of an emperor. Asked to point to 'the palace' on a map of the Byzantine empire, most would point to the Great Palace – not because it was the only palace or because it was in Constantinople, but because it is the best documented of all Byzantine palace complexes in Greek and non-Greek accounts; because it was the (often temporary) home to the emperor and his court for the duration of the Byzantine empire; and because we have sections of it remaining to us today. In Middle Byzantine Constantinople (843–1204) we know of palaces that were single buildings and those that were multiple buildings arranged in complexes. My focus in this chapter is on this period alone. Any comprehensive analysis of 'palace' for this volume would result in an unmanageable survey of sites known from architectural remains and from textual descriptions. It would also be redundant, as the seminal works of Müller-Wiener and more recent scholarship provide much of this information.[2] I seek rather to broaden the definition of 'palace'. If we remove the architecture but retain the ceremonial, audience, imperial presence and material culture, is it still a palace? Application of the 'duck test' is appropriate: if it looks like a palace – in terms of material culture – and if it acts like a palace – if it fulfils the same functions as built palaces, in terms of ceremonial and audience – then it is a palace.

When the emperor was on campaign, he was accompanied by an extensive entourage of court officials and impressive quantities of luxury objects for display and gifting.[3] He was housed in an imperial pavilion set at the centre of an encampment, a position both pragmatic and symbolic.[4] When the army marched, the hieratic order of officials and the objects processed before and behind the emperor echoed that of imperial processions and receptions in Constantinople.[5] Once the obvious differences are put aside – it was not made of bricks and mortar, and was not stationary – it is possible to see the similarities in function. An imperial campaign provided an imperial stage set for ceremonial, both secular and sacred.

Margaret Mullett and Michael Jeffreys, among others, have written extensively on imperial military tents, and have noted the similarities between these tents and constructed palaces.[6] I suggest that the tent cannot be singled out when we look at campaign ceremonial; it was a part of an intricate whole, much like the component palace buildings, passages and processional routes described in Constantinopolitan ceremonial. In what follows I argue that this 'whole' is a palace, and use the term 'campaign palace' to differentiate it from its architectural counterparts. The campaign palace – the military, the court entourage, the baggage train and the imperial tents, featuring the emperor and objects associated with imperial power and with Constantinople – can be viewed as a microcosm of the imperial city in general and the imperial palaces in particular.[7]

The palaces of Constantinople were, for residents of the city, foreign diplomats, and chosen visitors, without doubt *the* palaces, but not everyone within the sphere of Byzantine influence visited the city, nor did all visitors to the city gain entrance to the palaces. For many more – perhaps for most – the campaign palace provided visible, tangible proof of the divinely approved power of the empire. It can be argued that the campaign palace allowed for a closer view of imperial power, as in it the emperor was not concealed behind walls, or viewed from a distance, in processions.[8] The intended audience was non-Constantinopolitan and often non-Byzantine.

If there were differences between the campaign and constructed palaces, there were also, and were perhaps more, similarities. In both, the visual messages of imperial power and piety were conveyed through a series of stage sets – the organisation and display of the emperor and his entourage – and by the display and dissemination of specific objects. The roles played by the emperor, his court, and the audience were established. Such established ceremonial required specific objects, and when adjustments are made for the nature of the campaign palace, we find that what was required for the ceremonial of the campaign palace is comparable to that required in the palaces of Constantinople.

The campaign palace

When the emperor left the city, everything either went with him or was picked up along the route. The provisions for the campaign were assembled following consideration of many things, including the size of the Byzantine force, the projected length of the campaign and its intended destination, the terrain, the time of year, availability of water, and the nature, degree and location of the opposition.[9] But these provisions were only a part of what was taken on the road.

There is a transparency in the textual descriptions of objects taken on campaign that is not found in those of Constantinopolitan receptions in the Great Palace. For built palaces we have exhaustive details of protocol and ceremonial, and detailed instructions as to what objects must be procured, and from where, but we are left ignorant as to the number and material composition of imperial chamber pots, for example – information that is provided for the

campaign palace.[10] All objects were packed according to detailed instructions that dictated the types of containers in which things were placed, which functionary was responsible for obtaining and overseeing which objects, and which wagon carried which things. This detailed record-keeping allowed everything to be quickly located and used or displayed as needed. When it was no longer needed it would be put back in place, stored until it was needed again.

The objects necessary for the emperor's health and comfort, and for his display – whether on the move or stationary – were transported by the imperial baggage train. The quantity and quality of these luxury items, and their monetary value, were noted by Michael Psellos. In his account of the rout of the imperial army under Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034) in 1030, he states 'first they seized the imperial tent, which was nearly as valuable as the palace of today'.[11] He then describes what was taken, before ending with a standard trope: 'To count the multitude of these treasures would have been no easy task, nor to admire enough their beauty and magnificence, so great and luxurious was the profusion of wealth in the emperor's tent'.[12] It was not the *assembled* tent that was captured, but the wagons carrying the tents and all the things necessary to the emperor on campaign. Psellos was able to describe what was taken because the objects in the imperial baggage train were recorded, down to the last chamber pot.

The campaign palace also featured a moveable imperial chapel, thus incorporating the necessary spiritual component of Constantinople and imperial palaces. These chapels were tents, equipped with what is rather laconically described as 'sacred furniture', and staffed with clergy.[13] The presence of relics is another constant in the descriptions of the campaign palace. On the march, an official wearing a reliquary containing a relic of the True Cross preceded the emperor; in front of him was a second official 'bearing a gold, jeweled cross'.[14] We also read of relics of the maphorion and icons of the Theotokos accompanying emperors into the field.[15]

These highly charged objects, symbolic not only of divinely appointed rule and imperial piety but also resonant of Constantinople and past military victories, were carried in impressive procession as the camp moved, flanked by double lines of imperial horses accoutered in purple and gold, and accompanied by the rank and file of the imperial household, and of course, the emperor.

Not all objects were for imperial use, as there were guests to entertain and gifts to disperse. It might not have been known which particular minor nobility, military officials, or 'distinguished refugees' would be encountered and entertained, but it was known that people of such rank would be encountered, and then would need to be entertained and presented with appropriate gifts.[16] People of the villages and country would also come to see the emperor, and there would be petitioners.[17] In sum, the potential audience was vast and varied, but it was composed of known classes and ranks of people, Byzantine but non-Constantinopolitan, and non-Byzantine.

There are lists of specific things to be packed for entertaining: 'tufted rugs for reclining, so that guests could rest,' and objects specified as being for the use of

guests, including silver chamber pots and imperial chalices.[18] It is clear that some items were used for show. The everyday imperial table service was silver, but 'when foreign guests eat with the emperor' the table was set with four solid gold plates, two gold vases, and two solid gold jugs.[19]

The effect of a campaign palace is made vividly clear in the accounts of the 1158 campaign to Antioch of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) for the purpose of capturing and subjugating the Rupenid prince T'oros II. After bringing T'oros to heel, Manuel settled in, outside the walls of Antioch, to the great alarm of the Latin nobility inside. According to Kinnamos and William of Tyre, he stayed for several months, hunting, enjoying the natural springs, and receiving and entertaining guests, 'showering them with garments, silken stuff and precious vases'.[20] Manuel thus performed as the suzerain, to the consternation of those within the walls, who thought he was their guest. The stage setting in which this took place was a campaign palace.

As this account demonstrates, gift-giving was a primary function of the campaign palace, whether stationary or on the move. The lists of gifts intended for imperial distribution are impressive in the exquisite refinement of their ranking, and reflect, I suggest, a keen knowledge of the potential audience. The majority of the gifts were garments, classified as being of the first, second or third quality and rigidly specified as to cut, cloth, colour and decoration.[21] Garments of the first and second quality were from the imperial workshops in Constantinople, while those of the third and below are characterised as being 'locally produced', possibly from workshops in *aplekta* (marching camps).[22] The quality of each garment is reflected in the container in which it was packed.[23] Those of the first quality went in purple-dyed leather cases, those of local production in 'sacks'.[24]

To my knowledge it has not been previously remarked that geography as well as rank played a part in determining the type of decoration on garments distributed by the emperor. According to the text, in the Roman theme high-ranking officials were presented with tailored garments with double and triple borders of silk, decorated with non-figural imagery.[25] In the Armenian theme officials are given tailored garments with double borders of silk decorated with eagles or 'imperial symbols'.[26] Thus, the further from Constantinople, the more overt the signs of imperial power on the garments gifted by the emperor.

I suggest that reflections of the types and rankings of garments distributed by the emperor from the campaign palace are found in contemporary Byzantine popular literature, and in the royal imagery of the Caucasus. In *Digenes Akrites* the emir, father of the eponymous hero, goes from the eastern border to Cappadocia in order to convert to Christianity. Before entering Cappadocia he changes into 'Roman dress', a 'marvellous surcoat sprinkled with gold, of purple silk with a white triple border and ornamental griffins'.[27] Digenes himself, when a boy, dons leggings decorated with griffins, and is later presented by his mother-in-law with a tunic embroidered with griffins – in both cases these are garments that signify status, linking the wearer with legitimate power through the type of robes

acquired from the emperor.[28] And in both cases, the garments match those listed in the *Book of Ceremonies* as the prescribed type of gift for this type of person, in this territory.

The type and patterns of garments distributed on the borders of the empire may also explain the appearance of Byzantine garments on the sculpted images of tenth-century Georgian rulers. I suggest that the sculptures not only confirm that the instructions laid out for such distribution were followed, but also provide evidence that the symbolism of the particular type of garment was recognised by the recipients. The relief image of Ashot Kux, a minor prince of Tao who ruled briefly in the early tenth century, is now in the Tbilisi museum, but was originally displayed in the cathedral of Tbeti (Fig. 16.1). He is depicted wearing a surcoat embellished with lions, dress that is unique in both form and decoration in Georgian royal portraits.[29] Also puzzling are the robes depicted on two brothers of higher standing, princes of Tao who ruled in the late tenth century. The church of Osk Vank features two depictions of the brothers (Figs. 16.2 and 16.3). In the exterior image they both wear Byzantine garments that, as Antony Eastmond notes, do not correlate with current imperial fashion in Constantinople. The senior brother, Davit, on the left, held the Byzantine title of *magistros*, and wears a mantle decorated with figural imagery, while his brother's mantle has non-figural decoration.[30]

In these three images, created at the beginning and end of the tenth century, we find garments that correlate with those stipulated by the texts for distribution in the eastern frontier. The prince's rank as portrayed by their sculpted robes may not correctly reflect their status in the Georgian royal hierarchy, but the garments do indicate their place in the Byzantine *oikoumene* – from the Byzantine point of view. What they are depicted wearing is what is prescribed as gifts for these people, holding these positions, in these places: 'a tailored garment with a double border of silk, with eagles or with imperial symbols'.[31]

Constructed palaces

The *Book of Ceremonies* provides precise administerial instructions for every imperial occasion.[32] Two spaces in the Great Palace are identified as 'throne rooms': the Magnaura in the Sacred Palace, and the Chrysotriklinos in the Daphne Palace. The *Book of Ceremonies* indicates that the Magnaura was most frequently used for the receptions of foreign guests, and that they were often entertained in the Chrysotriklinos.[33] As the audience for the campaign palace was, as we have seen, not Constantinopolitan and often not Byzantine, I focus only on the two constructed palaces which served an audience that was most similar to that of the campaign palace.[34]

Four foreign receptions are described in the *Book of Ceremonies*: that of the Caliphal ambassadors from Tarsus in 946; representatives of the Spanish Umayyad court in 946/947; the emir of Amida in 946/947, and that of archontissa Olga from Rus, in 946 or 957.[35] The descriptions of these events are grouped into

one section and are presented chronologically. Taken together, these accounts indicate that, for the reception of foreign guests, there was a standard template.

For these two throne rooms, the following furniture was always present. In the Magnaura were the Throne of Solomon, two golden seats, and two silver organs (one of the Blue faction and one of the Green).[36] The Chrysotriklinos had only one piece of furniture specifically noted to be 'always there', the pentapyrgion, a golden seat-of-honor cum display-case, but it is reasonable to suggest that the golden throne and couches were also permanent.[37] The texts do not imply that any of these pieces were immobile; for the reception of the emir of Amida the golden imperial chairs in the Magnuara are said to be in the middle of the hall, seemingly indicating that their position was not fixed for each reception.[38] I note what *is* permanently on display to make an important point: every other object used to decorate these ceremonial spaces was brought in from elsewhere and was only in place when in use.[39]

The first account, that of the reception for the embassy from Tarsus, is the most detailed. It begins with instructions for decorating the Magnaura, then moves to the Chrysotriklinos, then to the various spaces between these halls, and finally to the processional route into the palace precinct. While my focus is on objects, it is important to remember in each case the presence of court and military officials, in elaborate bejewelled ceremonial costume, carrying, as was appropriate to their station, ceremonial swords, single- and double-headed axes, shields, pennants, insignia, staffs, and labara, all arranged according to rank.[40]

For this reception, the Magnaura was fitted out with nineteen polykandela from the Nea, hung from nineteen polished bronze chains from the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.[41] Skaramangia, hung from 'either side of the columns', were 'issued by the palace'.[42] The space between the columns was hung with sendal, a woven silk textile heavily embroidered and/or embellished.[43] The show-piece of the Magnaura was, of course, the golden Throne of Solomon, which went up and down while golden birds sang, golden lions roared, and golden beasts rose onto their hind legs.[44]

The decorations brought into the Magnaura are relatively modest and certainly seem restrained in comparison with those assembled in the Chrysotriklinos, an assemblage described in the text as those things 'customary for . . . Easter'.[45] The text notes the presence of the pentapyrgion, the imperial thrones, the gold couches and gold table – although, as previously remarked, only the pentapyrgion is singled out as being permanently installed. Everything else came from somewhere else.[46]

From the Pharos there were seven silver chains from which hung seven silver polykandela.[47] 'Various enameled objects' were brought from the Phylax.[48] There were crowns: nine from the Pharos, one from the Holy Apostles, and one from St. Demetrios. The crowns and the enameled objects were hung from chains in the vaults, arranged so that each crown was framed by two enameled objects.[49] Garments, some specified as being 'bridal', and an assortment of imperial jewellery, all attributed to the Augusta, were brought from St. Demetrios and the Phylax

and were displayed, hanging, from the central polykandelon.[50] Nine imperial chlamyses were somehow fitted in; of these, six were from different sites within the greater palace.[51] These were hung from the vaults with the crowns and enameled objects. 'Platters and large chased silver plates' from the stores in the Vestiarion of the Karianos were hung from the cornice, 'at the glazed windows'.[52] Above them, at the sixteen windows of the dome, were hung smaller plates matching the platters, and so presumably also from the Vestiarion of the Karianos.[53]

The passageways, exterior spaces and other ceremonial spaces were likewise decorated with luxurious objects. Silks, cloths and sendals and chased silver objects were procured from the stores of 'hospices and old-people's homes and the churches'.[54] The Nea, a seemingly endless source of polykandela, supplied a further twenty-four for use along the processional route.[55] The interior of the Chalke featured 'the great silver polykandelon' from the church of the Theotokos at Blachernai.[56] Silks and curtains were also borrowed from the Chrysotriklinos, characterised in the text by color and decoration.[57]

It is clear that these objects were brought in for the occasion and then returned, as there are instructions on things that are to be left in place. After the banquet, the guests were taken to the Hall of Justinian, where they refreshed themselves with rose water, unguents and perfumes. They then returned to their lodgings, passing through multiple halls and the Chrysotriklinos.[58] The instruction for the event ends thus: 'Note that the chased silver platters and plates were still hanging on the great cornice of the Chrysotriklinos and the small chased plates were still hanging in the window vaults of the dome'.[59]

Confirmation that the general practice was the speedy removal of all decoration is found in the description of what occurred 'after quite a number of days had passed' and the ambassadors from Tarsus asked, unexpectedly, for another audience with the emperor.[60] As the decorations previously displayed in the Chrysotriklinos had been taken away ('no longer lined with the trimming previously described'), only three crowns were available.[61] They were hung in the display cases of the pentapyrgion. It is also noted that 'there is no gold table'.[62] As there is no information given on where the table might be stored, 'no gold table' suggests that it was simply required elsewhere, and moved when it was, apparently, no longer needed in the Chrysotriklinos.

It is clear that all of the spaces visited by the ambassadors, from the area outside the Stable of the Mules to the throne rooms, were fitted out with things brought in from elsewhere. For the Chrysotriklinos, a set piece established for use at Easter was used, and from the list of objects it seems that the Easter template was, essentially, 'all of it'. The objects brought in to the Magnaura are fewer and relatively less impressive – polished bronze chains for the polykandela rather than the silver used in the Chrysotriklinos – but when we add the court, resplendent in official costume, and the show-piece to end all showpieces, the Throne of Solomon, we have a spectacle.

The fact that it was intended as spectacle, and that the aggregate was meant to overwhelm is confirmed by the description of the unfortunate *komes* of the stable

who were ordered by the emperor to wear torques decorated with gemstones and pearls. The text goes to some length to explain that while it is not normal for a 'non-eunuch to put on such a torque', the *komes* 'put these on for the purpose of display and only then'.[63] These large golden and jewelled items were thus not intended to be understood by the visitors as indicators of rank or status, but rather added to the overall impression of wealth – perhaps the ceremonial dress of the *komes* lacked the desired amount of 'bling'.

In the Magnaura, the 'the foreigner's gift' was presented, but no specifics as to its nature are given.[64] Between the reception in the Magnuara and the banquet in the Chrysotriklinos, the guests were taken to the Hall of Justinian, where they were presented with 'tailored tunics and the rest of their ceremonial dress' – as we have seen, this was also the type of gift distributed in the campaign palace.[65] While it is not stated, it is reasonable to assume that these garments were to be worn for the duration of their visit in Constantinople. The other documented act of gifting also occurred in the Hall of Justinian. For the occasion – an imperial banquet – the Hall was decorated with 'the chased silverware' and 'the entire tableware was produced', both brought from the Vestiarion of the Karianos.[66] After the emperor 'stood up from the table', the two most prestigious guests received 500 milaresia on 'gold plates decorated with precious stones', while the 'rest of their men' received 3,000 milaresia, presumably to divide amongst themselves.[67]

The ambassadors from Tarsus were also spectators at an overtly sacred ceremonial, as they were in Constantinople for the feast of the Transfiguration.[68] It was, we are told, 'conducted according to the format prescribed for it . . . except that, for the Saracen guests, the emperors wore the loroi but did not carry scepters or akakia'.[69] The imperial escort 'as usual' carried the great Cross and the Rod of Moses, 'and whatever else is stored in the church of the Lord'.[70] The guests stood in the Tribunal and watched the procession leave for Hagia Sophia and then return.[71]

Much less detail is given for the reception of the ambassadors from Cordoba. The text states first that it was 'in all respects like this one', that is, the reception held for those from Tarsus.[72] Detail is provided only when it is necessary to clarify differences in the decoration. The sendals, hung in the Magnaura for the caliphal ambassadors, were not used, but the Magnaura was instead decorated 'entirely with great skaramangia, and the Phylax's enameled objects were also hung in it'.[73] Sixteen silver polykandela from the Nea were hung between the columns on thirteen polished bronze chains, from 'Hormisdas', likely (again) the monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.[74]

When the emir of Amida was received, the Tarsus embassy was still there. The latter were brought first into the Magnaura, and spoke with the emperor, who was apparently not on the Throne of Solomon but on a gold throne placed in the middle of the hall. They then 'went away and sat' in the Hall of the Dome.[75] The emperor changed his chlamys, mounted the Throne of Solomon and received the emir of Amida, 'and everything for the reception took place as for the reception previously described for the guests from Tarsus'.[76]

Another reception, also said to be ‘in all respects like the reception previously described’, that is, for the embassy from Tarsus, was held in either 946 or 957 for the archonitissa of Rus, Olga.[77] The account goes into detail only when discussing the composition of the receiving court officials. It is clear that the reception of a woman required a different set of hosts, most notably the Augusta and her court. The setting, however, was the same. When Olga attended a banquet in the Chrysotriklinos, the focus of the account is on the amount of money she and her entourage were given; her gift was also presented on ‘a gold plate decorated with precious jewels’.[78]

Taken together, these accounts indicate that, for foreign guests, there was a standard form of reception. Within the standard, there were variables, such as the differing composition of attending court officials. The decoration followed a template, but here too there were variations depending on availability and audience. The only gifts described are those of garments and money, the latter on golden, bejewelled plates that were, presumably, part of the gift.

There is also an indication that while there were, from the Byzantine point of view, some things that *must* be seen, there was flexibility on *where* they could be seen. The Umayyad embassy did not dine with the emperor on the day of their reception, and thus did not go to the Chrysotriklinos.[79] As a result, the ‘enameled objects’ from the Phylax were put up in the Magnuara – these had been displayed in the Chrysotriklinos for the Tarsus embassy. It is also noted in the text that the sendals, on view for the ‘Saracens’, were not in place for the Umayyad delegation.[80] This detail further supports the suggestion that few objects had what can be called a permanent home.

Such accounts reveal the constructed palace to be less constructed than we perhaps thought. The Magnaura in particular is presented as a stage, ready to be equipped to purpose. There were, of course, objects already in place: the Throne of Solomon was a constant – and by definition a show-stopper, as each guest, called to the throne, twice waited for it to elevate and descend.[81] But the largely empty space was filled as required, with court officials and objects chosen for display for a particular audience, one that can be characterised as ‘not Byzantine’.

We have, in the constructed palaces, receptions of foreigners in which they processed through spaces. These spaces were decorated with luxury materials and objects, and were also crowded with people who were part of the display. As the guests entered through the Chalke Gate they encountered first representatives of the military, grouped according to what we can call job description, wearing their best uniforms and carrying their identifying weapons, insignia, and/or pennants. As the guests moved toward the palace buildings, the luxury increased in both the objects displayed – polykandela of silver, sendal rather than ‘cloth’ – and in the rank of the people on display – now members of the factions, court functionaries, officials, and military officers, all wearing increasingly gorgeous costumes, all holding staffs, swords, shields, pennants and insignia. When the guests are brought into the Magnaura, all the splendour seen on the procession from the Chalke is assembled into one hall, and then more is added – more luxury objects,

more high-ranking officials, and the lavishly decorated ceremonial robes. In the centre of it all was the emperor, flanked by the highest-ranking military officers and court officials, and by the imperial bodyguards. The silver organs played, the choir, brought in from the Holy Apostles, sang, the people chanted and the emperor, seated on the Throne of Solomon and wearing his most impressive regalia, rose up and down on the golden throne, amongst singing birds, roaring lions and rearing beasts.[82]

Function and display

One could argue that a spectacle is a spectacle, and, given that the components are similar for that held in the Magnaura and that displayed in the campaign palace, the effect of being stunned by it all in the Magnuara was equivalent to the effect of being stunned by it all on a road or *aplekton* in Anatolia. One suggested difference may have resulted from the different ways in which the spectacles were experienced. In the constructed palace, the audience moved. In the campaign palace, the palace moved. Despite this significant difference, the processes by which this experience was achieved, whether on the road or in the city, were surprisingly similar. For both, required objects were brought from elsewhere – be it the Pharos or the baggage train – and then returned. The architecture of the Magnaura and the Chrysotriklinos served as stages, on which the wealth and power of the empire was displayed. On those stages we find the same rank and class of people, and similar objects, as are on display in the campaign palace – with the caveat that the Constantinopolitan ceremonial displayed more of everything, as would be expected.

The nature of the campaign palace means that it was multi-functional. It was, at base, a functioning military on the march. It had spaces, such as the imperial pavilion, which served multiple functions, including receptions, banquets, and what can be called 'personal use' by the emperor. The constructed palaces were more restricted in function; as we have seen, the Magnaura was the site for the reception of foreign guests. These guests might also go to other places, but they were received in the Magnaura. In the *Book of Ceremonies* the only other recorded event held in the Magnaura is an assembly of the senate prior to the reception.[83] One does not find, for example, instructions for holding a banquet there, or information on what should be provided should the emperor wish to rest there. There were other buildings that served those purposes.

The items required for display and use for any purpose in the Magnaura or Chrysotriklinos were of the finest materials and craftsmanship, but they were also objects that could be used for any room – for example, polykandela light any space in which they are placed. The instructions for the assembly, execution and disassembly for each event are given in detail, and this allowed any specific event to be replicated with (one assumes) minimum fuss.

In this way, the *Book of Ceremonies* and its associated texts underscore the portability of objects. When we remove our modern expectation of things

'having a place', we can see the practicality of portable objects that were used, stored and then used again, perhaps in a different location for a different type of ceremonial. The practice of hanging everything, with few exceptions, certainly heightened the visual impression made by the whole. The placement of large silver platters in front of the windows of the Chyrsotriklinos, for example, is bravura showmanship – but it is also convenient to have everything hung, as it can be put up and taken down with relative ease. Much the same observation can be made about the richly decorated costumes worn at the reception. The assembled group was arranged, we are told, by the color and decoration of their robes – creating another brilliant display; this is also a supremely clever way to quickly organise a large group of people.[84]

The impression of things constantly in motion is also apparent in the descriptions of what things were to be used where in the campaign palace. The instructions detail this motion – objects were packed, stored, unpacked, displayed or used, and, with the exceptions of gifts, then re-packed and re-stored. Of course here everything was, by definition, portable, including the people in the procession. But just as in the constructed palaces, each object was kept in a carefully recorded place, and so was easily found.

Conclusion

I argue that we broaden the definition of palace, and privilege function over buildings. If we take into consideration the impression made by the sheer size of the campaign palace – multiple kilometers in length – the horses and pack animals, the wagons laden with every necessary thing, all carefully packed and closely attended, the marching soldiers, the mounted military and court officials, the imperial baggage train – in short, the smell, the noise, the *spectacle* of it all – and add to this the imperial presence, we find more similarities than differences with the ceremonial of the constructed palaces of Constantinople.[85] For those who stood and saw the emperor and his forces on the move, and for those who were admitted to the stationary imperial presence, and came away with gifts confirming their status within the empire – for those people, I contend that what they saw was a palace – the campaign palace.

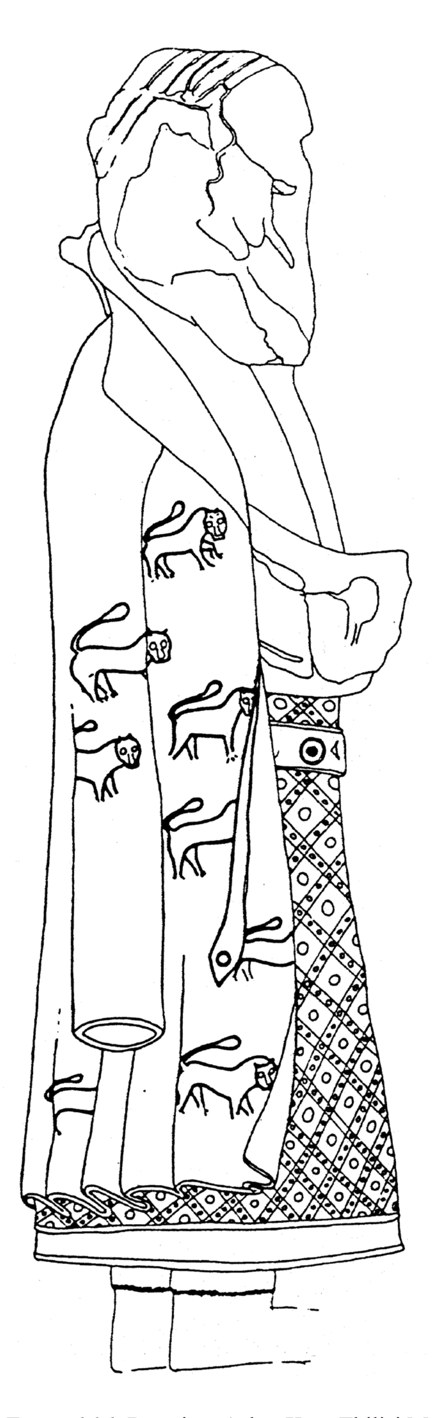


Figure 16.1 Drawing, Ashot Kux, Tbilisi Museum, courtesy of A. Eastmond

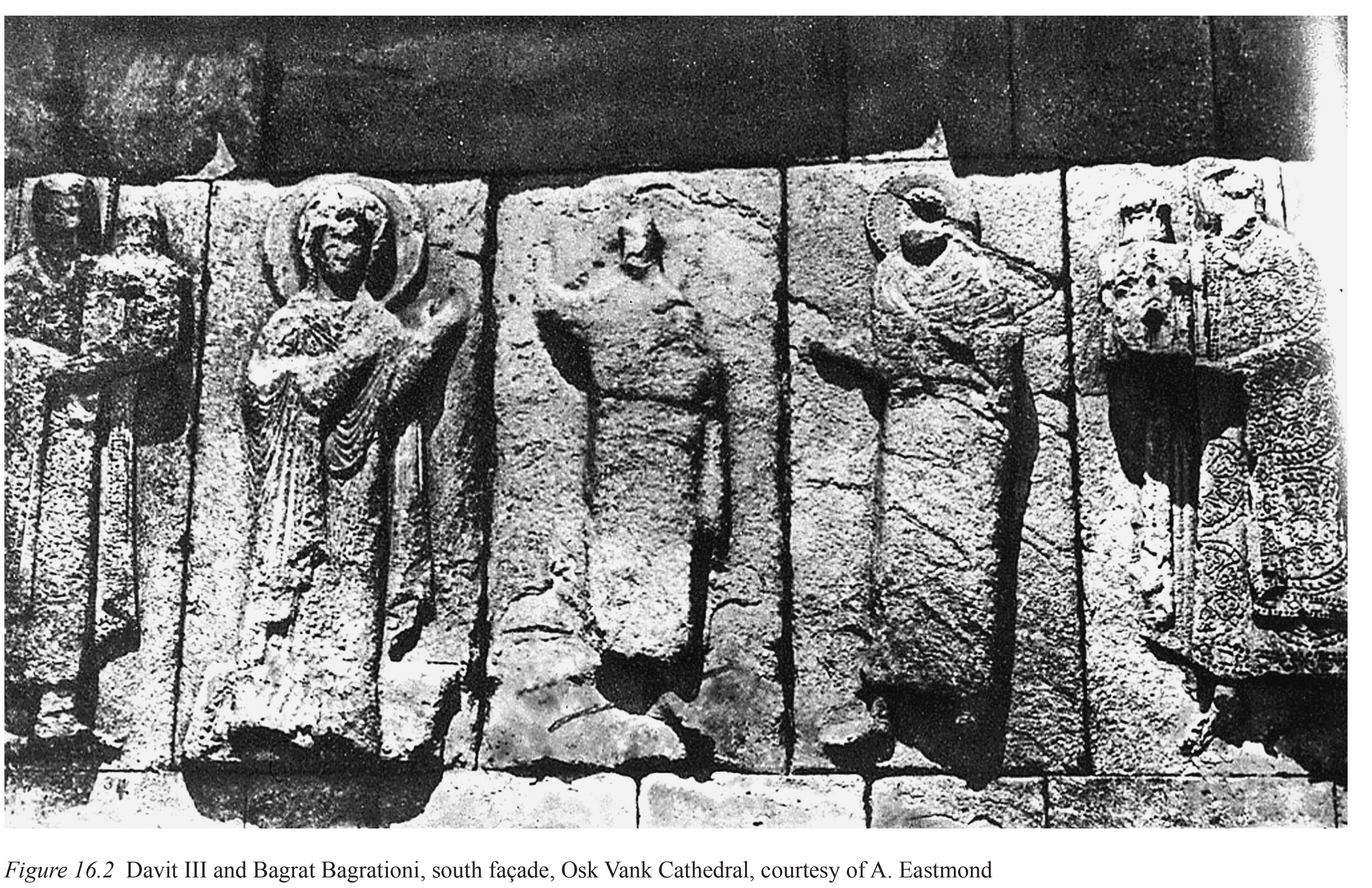


Figure 16.2 Davit III and Bagrat Bagrationi, south façade, Osk Vank Cathedral, courtesy of A. Eastmond

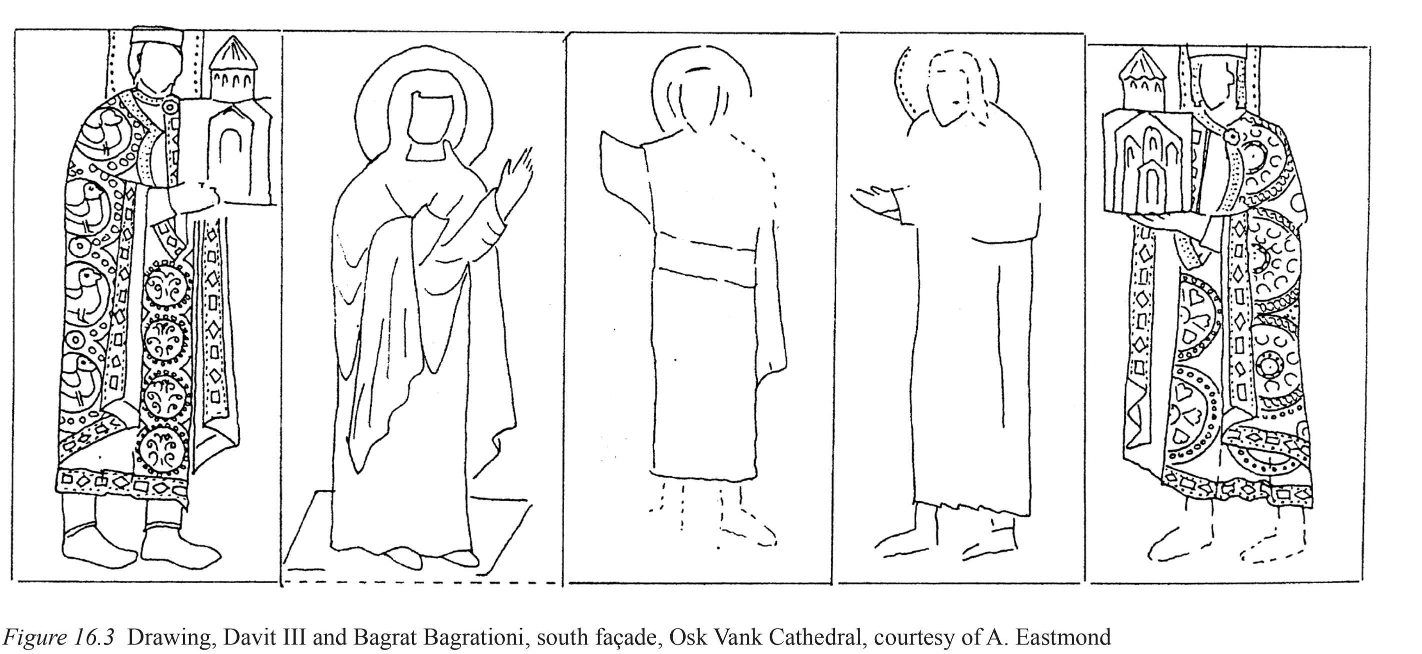


Figure 16.3 Drawing, Davit III and Bagrat Bagrationi, south façade, Osk Vank Cathedral, courtesy of A. Eastmond

Notes

1 I thank Shaun Tougher, the Symposiarch of the Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies held at Cardiff in April 2014, for his invitation to participate in the symposium, and for his patience during the editing process. I thank the symposium audience for their valuable comments and suggestions. This chapter benefitted from conversations with Annemarie Weyl Carr, Anthony Cutler, Antony Eastmond, Brad Hostetler, Tia Kolbaba and Denis Sullivan; I am fortunate to have such generous colleagues. I am indebted once again to Antony Eastmond for permission to use his line drawings.

2 Müller-Wiener 1977. More recently, see the following excellent volumes with full bibliography: Bauer, ed. 2006, and Ödelam, Necipoğlu and Akyürek eds. 2013.

3 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 104–109. For the emperor on campaign see also Chapter 9 by Frank Trombley and Shaun Tougher in this volume.

4 *Anonymous Book on Tactics* 1.107–127, ed. trans. Dennis 1985: 250–253, figs. 6–8.

5 Comparative examples here: on campaign, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 124–125; in the Magnaura, *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 566–598.

6 Mullett 2013; Jeffreys 2000; Anderson and Jeffreys 1994. I thank Margaret for graciously providing the texts of lectures she presented while this volume was forthcoming, and so could not be considered here, and a draft of her forthcoming article 'Tents in space, space in tents', to be included in a volume on *Courts on the Move: Perspectives from the Global Middle Ages* (Mullet forthcoming).

7 I first presented this idea, in much reduced form, at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies in 2006, in a panel I co-ordinated for the occasion: Jones 2006. I thank the audience for their comments and encouragement to further explore the subject.

8 McCormick 1985: 19, for a discussion of the use of purple garments in allowing the emperor to be identified in processions. For a similar use of bright colors for royal display and visibility, see the neon green suit worn by Queen Elizabeth II for her 90th birthday celebration: Hunt 2016.

9 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the emperor intends to go on an expedition*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text B: 82–85.

10 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 108–109.

11 Psellos, *Chronographia* 3.10.6–10, trans. Sewter 1966: 69: '. . .necklaces and bracelets and diadems, pearls and precious stone even more costly, all kinds of glorious booty'.

12 Psellos, *Chronographia* 3.10.10–13, trans. Sewter 1966: 69.

13 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 106–107, with the instructions that the chapel is to be carried not by the *minsourator*, but rather by the *primikerios* of the *vestiarion*. The *minsourator* carries the 'sacred vessels', while the *vestiarion* is in charge of the liturgical books.

14 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 124–125, 'a *koubikoularios* carrying the holy and life-giving wood of the Cross, with the case about his neck' and a '*signophoros* bearing a golden, bejewelled cross'.

15 Some examples from the Middle Byzantine period are discussed, with bibliography, in Mergiali-Sahas 2001; Sullivan 2012; Nelson 2011–2012; and Nancy Ševčenko 1994.

16 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 108–109, 'εὐγενῶν προσφύγων'.
17 For the procedure on accepting petitions, see Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 124–127.
18 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 104–107 (for the cushions), 108–109 (for the chalices and chamber pots.
19 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 112–113.
20 For a discussion and bibliography of contemporary texts concerning this event, see Jones and Maguire 2002.
21 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 108–111.
22 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 108–113.
23 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 108–111.
24 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 110–111, 113–115.
25 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 126–127.
26 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 126–127.
27 *Digenis Akritis*, Grottaferrata 3.257–259, ed. trans. Jeffreys 1998: 58–59.
28 *Digenis Akritis*, Grottaferrata 4.226–228, 4.920–923, ed. trans. Jeffreys 1998: 80–81, 120–121.
29 Eastmond 1998: 9–17, figs. 2–3.
30 Davit III and Bagrat Bagrationi, portrayed in low relief on the south facade of Osk Vank, now in central Turkey. Contemporary imperial imagery shows the emperor in the loros rather than the chlamys: Eastmond 1998: 26–27, 228–230.
31 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *What should be observed when the great and high emperor of the Romans goes on campaign*, ed. and trans. Haldon 1990, Text C: 126–127.
32 For the *Book of Ceremonies* see also Chapter 12 by Prerona Prasad and Chapter 15 by Alicia Walker in this volume.
33 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 566–598. The excellent article by Angelidi 2013 provided a foundation upon which to build my argument.
34 I restrict my comments to particular aspects of ceremonial in two great halls of the Great Palace. Much of the important work has been done recently: see for example Maguire, ed. 1996; Ödelam, Necipoğlu and Akyürek, eds. 2013; Beihammer, Constantinou and Parani, eds. 2013.
35 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 566–579 (for the basic template). For the expedition from Tarsus see Moffat and Tall 2012: 570–592; for that from Cordoba see Moffat and Tall 2012: 570–571, 580; for that from Amida see Moffat and Tall 2012: 593, for that of Olga see Moffat and Tall 2012: 594–598.
36 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 570–571.

37 For the pentapyrgion see *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586, 593.
38 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 593.
39 See the appendices in Angelidi 2013.
40 The instructions for ordering the rank and file, and for their costumes, begins with those in the Magnaura and works outward, culminating at the Chalke: *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 574–579.
41 On the chains see *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 570, 571 (for the polykandela).
42 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 571.
43 For the definition of sendal, see *LBG*: 1540, s.v. 'σενδές'. For the objects, see *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 571.
44 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 567, 569.
45 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580.
46 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580.
47 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 581.
48 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580.
49 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 581.
50 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 582.
51 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580–581.
52 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 582.
53 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 582.
54 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 572.
55 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 572–573.
56 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 573.
57 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 573. Perhaps these were for 'quotidian' use in the Chrysotriklinos, and thus available when the Easter template was installed, with gold curtains.
58 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586.
59 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586.
60 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586.
61 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586–587.
62 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 586–587.
63 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 584.
64 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 569.
65 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 584.
66 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 592.
67 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 592.
68 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 591–592.
69 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 591.
70 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 591.
71 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 591.
72 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 571.
73 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 571.
74 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 571–572.
75 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 593.
76 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 593.
77 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 594–598.
78 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 597–598.
79 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580.
80 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 580. For the use of 'Sacracens', see Moffat and Tall 2012: 583 n.1.
81 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 568–569.
82 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 572–580.

83 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 566, when the senate assembles to change into ceremonial costume.
84 *De cer.* 2.15, trans. Moffat and Tall 2012: 578.
85 It is hard to imagine someone less impressionable than Psellos, but when he led an embassy to Isaac I Komnenos (1057–1059) he described the experience of the campaign palace as 'an imperial spectacle', 'capable of overawing anyone': *Chronographia* 7.23–24, trans. Sewter 1966: 288–289. His description focuses on the choreographed roar of the assembled army and the varied, splendid appearance of Isaac's attendents (one 'tribe painted themselves and plucked out their eyebrows') as much as it does on the imperial tent and its decorations.

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17

UNVEILING BYZANTIUM IN WALES

Connections and collections[1]

Mark Redknap

Introduction

This chapter originated as a paper delivered at National Museum Cardiff as a public lecture and keynote welcome to delegates at the 47th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies held in Cardiff in April 2014, the first time that the conference had come to Wales. It draws attention to aspects of imperial associations, perceived or real, within the archaeology of Wales and western Britain, and to Byzantine collections of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.

Advances in the study of coinage and the controlled archaeological investigations of early medieval sites have substantially increased our knowledge of cultural connections with the Byzantine world and imperial policy. In Britain this focus has been sharpened by numismatic evidence recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, recent excavations and new scientific analyses. Past proceedings have covered a wide range of specific issues relating to production, supply and circulation, and this chapter focuses on a review of new archaeological data with a focus on Wales, and on the little-known Byzantine material curated at National Museum Cardiff (including previously unpublished imperial coinage).

Much-debated literary sources suggest a range of connections between early medieval Britain and the Mediterranean world (e.g. networks of trade, pilgrimage, the activities of clerics, diplomatic initiatives, and from the reign of Basil II in the tenth century the recruitment of mercenaries). The well-known late seventh-century story in the *Life of John the Almsgiver* of an Alexandrian cargo of wheat from Egypt being exchanged for tin and gold (at the rate of a *nomisma* (solidus) per bushel or a return cargo of tin: ἢ ἑκαστῳ μοδιῳ ἁλοκοτινιν η ἀντίφορτου κασσίτερου) has been thought by some to imply that people in Britain had gold bullion or coinage – either official Byzantine issues or Merovingian copies.[2] This account might be dismissed as the fabulous imaginings of the writer, were it not for the growing body of archaeological evidence for some form of trading contact on high-status royal sites in Britain and Ireland.[3] While much evidence for direct contact is ambiguous and open to interpretation, the significant indirect contact through networks of trade, travel and diplomatic exchange operating

across the post-Roman world inevitably resulted in the influx of Byzantine products as well as ideas. The scope and changing scale of such exchanges continues to become clearer with increasing quantities of archaeological data.

Words

The much-studied early medieval inscribed stones from Penmachno in Gwynedd, usually dated to the sixth century, provides an interesting case of the changing interpretations of reference in early medieval western Britain to overseas empire (Fig. 17.1).



Figure 17.1 The Penmachno inscription (cast). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

The top reads '. . . son of Avitorius'. The lower inscription *intep[o]. . ./ivst[. . ./ co[n]. . .*was first expanded by John Rhys in 1915 as *In te(m)po(re) Iust(ini) con(sulis. . .)*, 'in the time of Just[inus] the consul . . .', identified at the time as Justinus who was consul of Rome and Gaul in 541. He also recognised that because of the post-consular dating system, the inscription probably dated after 541.[4] Jeremy Knight suggested that the two inscriptions may not be contemporary, and that the second may have been the final dating clause of a longer inscription on the now missing right half on the stone. He proposed a reconstruction to read: *In te(m)po(re) Iust(ini Post) Con(sulatum XXV)*, 'in the time of Justinus, twenty five years after the consulship', a possible reading accepted by Carlo Tedeschi.[5] Dating in the mid- and late sixth century gave dates by specifying that the year was so many years after the consulate of Iustinus (540) or Basilius (541).

Nancy Edwards has recently supported the view that the two inscriptions are contemporary, as the capital letter forms are similar, and of the various readings and interpretations for the horizontal inscription, adopts Knight's transcription and translates as 'in the time of Just. . . the consul. . . *or* consulship', but admits that identifying the Justinus concerned is problematic.[6] Mark Handley has been wary of equating *Iust. . .* as Iustinus consul in 541, pointing to a consul with the same name who held the post in 519 and 524, or the emperor Justinian I, who held the post of consul in the West four times – in 521, 528, 533, and 534.[7] Thomas Charles-Edwards has recently suggested that the inscription might refer to Iustinus Minor (the emperor Justin II), dated not from the start of his reign but his successive consulships from 567 to 579.[8] Certainty on which consul is referred to is elusive, though as Edwards points out, Justinus consul in 541 most commonly appears in consular and post-consular epitaphs and remains the strongest candidate.[9] Whichever was the case, the inscription appears to illustrate an indirect knowledge, at least, in north Wales of consular/post-consular dating traditions at this time.

Coins

One consequence of the collecting habits of residents in Britain, whether antiquaries, tourists, collectors, dealers or service personnel returning from abroad, is that there has been a degree of scepticism for some time regarding the discovery of Byzantine coins on 'British' soil and their significance.

The Byzantine empire used its coinage, in particular the coin multiples of the sixth and seventh centuries, as gifts, through a functioning network of diplomatic representatives. Coin was dispatched in bulk to western rulers, in particular the Frankish kings.[10] While the primary use of coin was for currency, many of the gold coins were turned into coin jewellery, while others will have been melted down to make ornaments and other forms of jewellery.

In preparing the maps of distribution in Britain (Figs. 17.2, 17.3) I have relied heavily on two recent publications. The first is the impressive catalogue of early Byzantine gold coins found in Britain and Ireland by Roger Bland and Xavier Loriot.[11] The early Byzantine gold coin map also incorporates more recently

reported finds on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database (Fig. 17.2). Most are coins of Justinian I, and some have been converted into jewellery.[12] The coin distribution shows a clear eastern bias from Kent to East Anglia and up to the area around York, suggesting importation via Frankish territories, a point also noted by Cecile Morrison in her perceptive paper published six months after this Symposium.[13] Later Byzantine coins appear more scattered, reflecting the dynamics of Anglo-Norman change (for example, a gold histamenon of Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) from the Bedale area of North Yorkshire).[14]

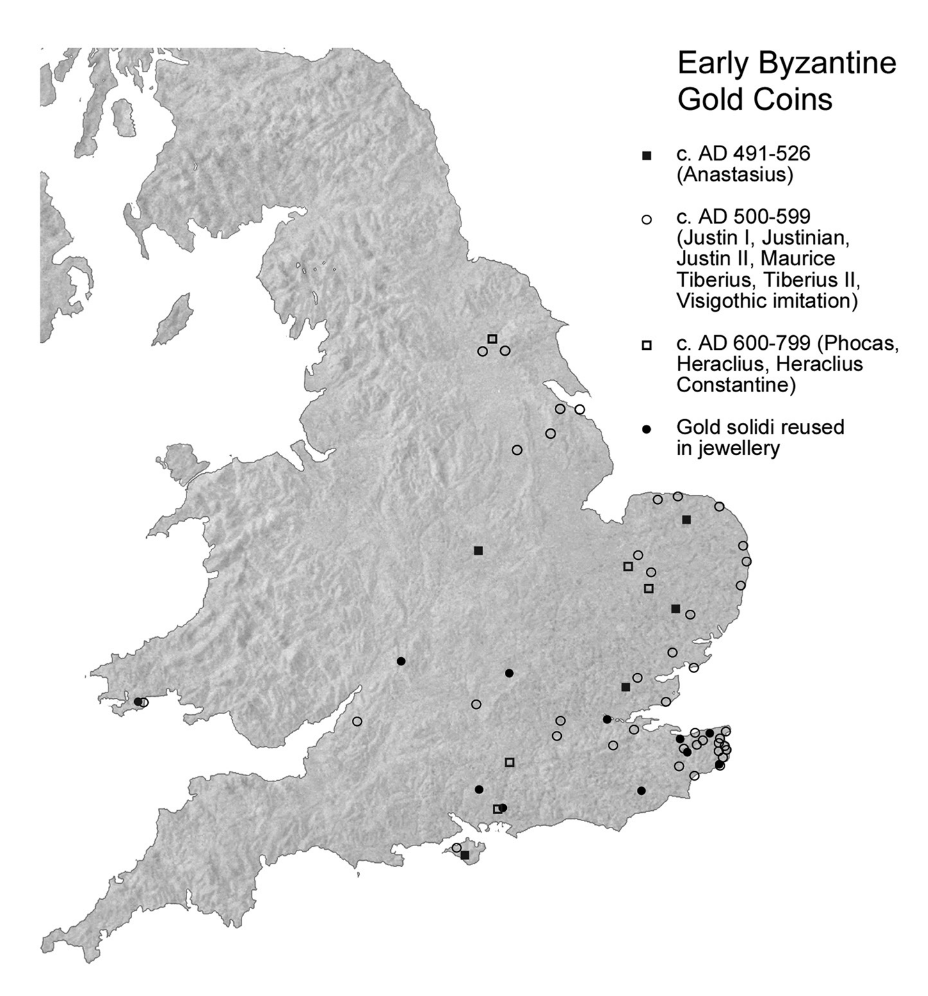


Figure 17.2 Distribution of early Byzantine gold coins in Britain. (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

The second source, itself drawing on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database, is the corpus published in 2009 by Sam Moorhead on Byzantine copper coinage in the light of new Portable Antiquities Scheme entries. Its starting point was an influential paper published in 1991 by the late George Boon, former Keeper of Archaeology, National Museum of Wales, in which the author could only identify three definite ancient losses of Byzantine coins – from excavations at Winchester and Southampton and a burial at Barfeston in Kent[15] – and five that might have been ancient losses (from a drainage ditch at Princetown, Devon; from excavations at Richborough, Kent; two from Ilchester, Somerset, and one from Meols, Cheshire[16]).

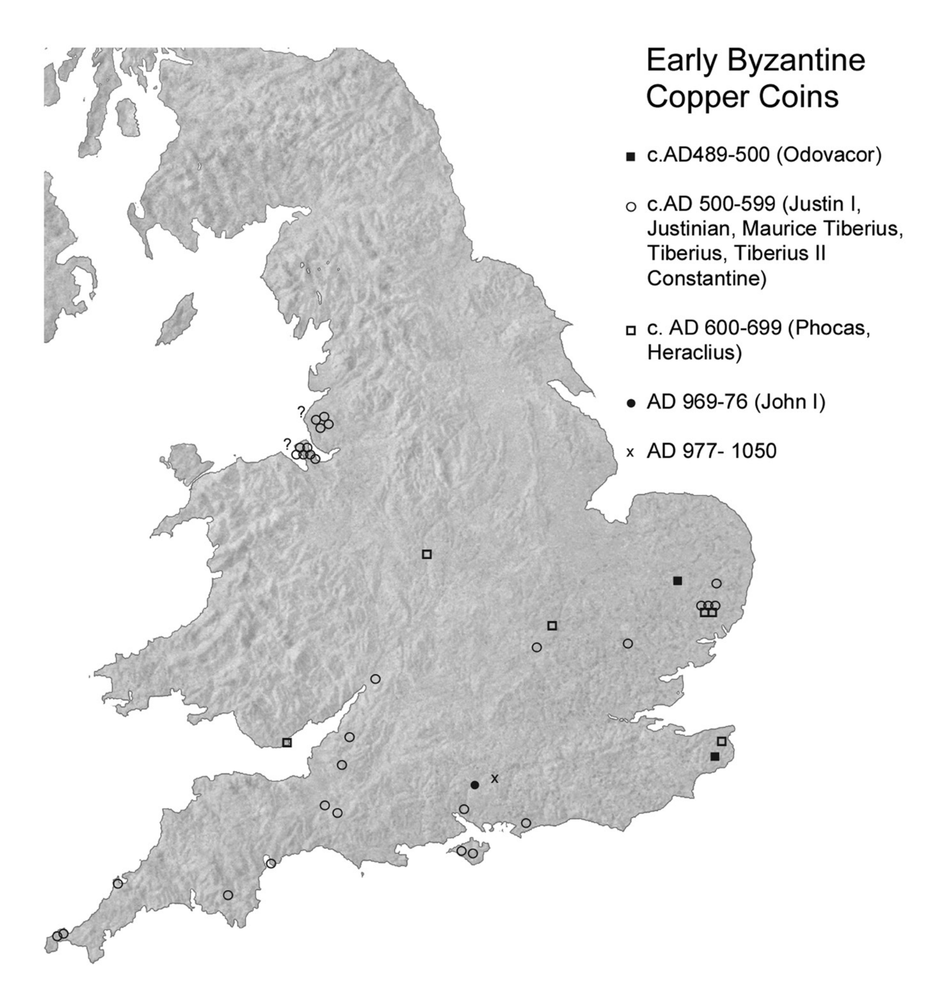


Figure 17.3 Distribution of early copper Byzantine coins in Britain. (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

The rest (about 120), he argued persuasively were not reliable, including some from Caerwent (excluded from Fig. 17.4, though given a 'last chance' by Morrisson[17]), and had probably crept in by other agencies. Between 1998 and 2009, the Portable Antiquities Scheme recorded around twenty copper Byzantine coins, and while some early and late Byzantine coins did not appear to be ancient losses, Moorhead recognised about sixteen that could be ancient losses (details of find-spots and circumstances of discovery are provided with each entry on the PAS database).[18] The distribution of copper coins presented here uses Moorhead's corpus, and incorporates PAS finds recorded since 2009.

Most of the coins found in Britain are sixth-century folles of Justinian I (527–565), with supporting fractions from half-follis to the pentanummium.[19] For the seventh century most come from Carthage, and two were found during excavations. A half-follis of Heraclius (610–641; Carthage mint) was recovered from an unstratified context during excavations at Cosmeston in the Vale of Glamorgan (though this has a dubious patina unusual for the area). Excavations at the Roman fort at Richborough, which was occupied during the early medieval period, produced a half-follis of Constans II (a 646–659 overstrike on an earlier Constans coin).[20] The present author has accepted Moorhead's exclusions, adding copper coins found since 2009, and removing a follis of Phocas reported to have been found near Leominster but now thought to have a false provenance (Fig. 17.3).[21]

The plotted distribution appears to support three regional foci across England and Wales suggested by Moorhead. The majority are coastal (easy access to the sea), and the largest group have been reported from sites in south-west England and south Wales. To this regional cluster Moorhead includes those found in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight, as they had strong Roman and early medieval maritime associations (such as a high proportion of fourth-century Roman coins from eastern Mediterranean mints). This is supported by the discovery in 2008 of an incomplete sixth-/seventh-century copper-alloy and silver Byzantine weight of 12 scruples reported from the Isle of Wight.[22] Since 2009, an anonymous follis attributed to Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034) has been found at Ropley, Hampshire; a follis of Anastasius (491–518) has been found at High Roothing,[23] Essex; a decanummium of Justinian I and a follis of Tiberius II Constantine (578–582) have been recorded from the Isle of Wight;[24] and a half-follis of Heraclius has been recorded from Nunney, Somerset.[25] At least seven Byzantine coins have been found at Winchester.[26] Most were early finds discovered during drainage or construction work, or gardening; one of the eleventh-century anonymous folles minted at Constantinople was found during excavations in 1970, in a deposit dated to the eleventh or twelfth century. There seems to be no reason to doubt the other Winchester coins as ancient losses. The later period Byzantine artefacts found at Winchester coincide with a period of connections through English mercenaries at the Byzantine court, and the expansion and economic growth of the town as an administrative centre.

Of later Byzantine coin finds, an unconfirmed anonymous follis of the Byzantine emperor Michael IV (1034–1041) was reportedly found in the

nineteenth century during excavation of the chancel of the old church, Penarth (now St. Augustine's church), together with three fourth-century bronze coins. The follis has been considered to be an antiquarian loss.[27] Relocating this coin would enable its reassessment.

The second proposed 'regional' cluster covers the East Midlands, East Anglia and Kent. Of these, two have vague provenances and may not be ancient losses. Moorhead concluded that eastern England was thin on copper coinage, though more recently three folles alongside Merovingian tremisses have been reported from Rendlesham which illustrates the incomplete nature of the database.[28]

The third regional cluster focuses on Meols on the Wirral (five) and north-west England. A decanummium of Justinian I was found during construction work at Moreton near Meols, which produced a significant quantity of Byzantine material – the St. Menas ampulla, two folles of Justin I and Maurice (582–602), and two folles of Justinian I. These are recent rather than antiquarian finds, for which there is good locational information.[29] Even more recently, a follis of Justinian I has been reported from Seacombe on the Wirral.[30] If a recently found group of four 12-noumia coins of Maurice from Alexandria reported in 2014 from Halsall near Ormskirk, were lost in antiquity, they further emphasise this cluster.



Figure 17.4 Gold solidi from Tenby, Pembrokeshire, Wales (scale 2:1). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

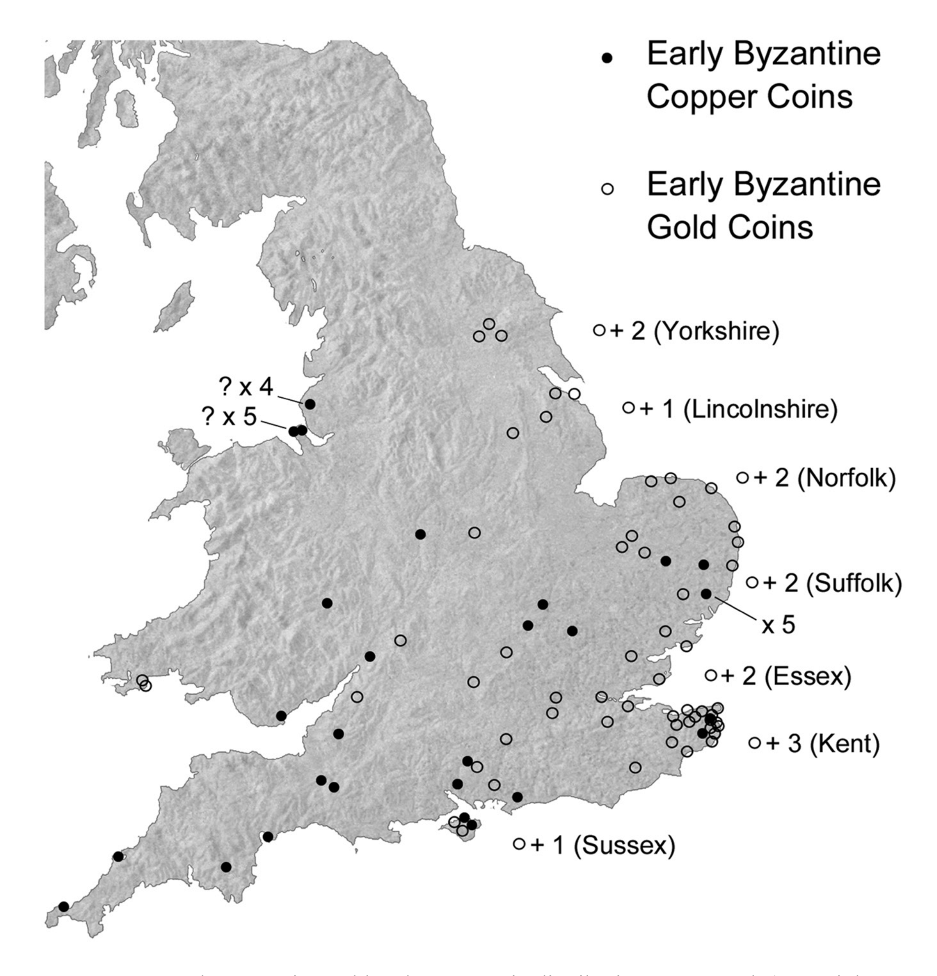


Figure 17.5 Early Byzantine gold and copper coin distributions compared. (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

Griffiths and others have suggested that these objects may be connected with the spread of early Christianity, as well as a continuation of late Roman trading activity.[31] One would expect North Wales, including Anglesey, to belong to this cluster. The reliability of the findspot of a Sassanian drachm of Xusro II (Khosrau II,/ Chosroes II, 590–628), found rolled as a cylinder 'near Llangwyllog' in the centre of Anglesey (not far from Cefn Cwmwd) has recently been questioned, and excavations at Llanbedrgoch on the east side of Anglesey have produced a coin series which at present starts in the ninth century (with no Byzantine coins), although there is occupational activity from at least the earlier seventh century, and earlier radiocarbon dates have been obtained.

In addition to the early Byzantine copper coins, further gold Byzantine and pseudo-Byzantine solidi have been reported through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. They include two solidi from Pembrokeshire, interestingly both at South Beach Tenby on the same weekend some years ago, after a large storm, by father and son, but not working together (Fig. 17.4). The earlier coin is a solidus of Justinian I (Constantinople), while the later coin is a solidus of Tiberius II (698–705), both minted in Constantinople. The Tiberius solidus is much later in date (late seventh or early eighth century), and differs in being pierced above the emperor's head – with a curious narrow slot rather than the more common method of perforation by drilling a circular hole. This suggests firstly, that while it may have been pierced to be worn as jewellery on a necklace, it could have been pierced to be sewn onto textile, and secondly that the coins may have circulated with different functions, and at different times. It has been suggested that both of the Welsh solidi might originate from a shipwreck,[32] but in view of their differences, other agencies are more plausible. If lost in antiquity, their discovery on the beach close to the early medieval elite site of *Dinbych* (Tenby), possibly on different occasions, further reflects the importance of Dinbych at this time. Dinbych provides a plausible economic context for the location. The coins are at present western outliers to the known, predominantly eastern, distribution of early Byzantine gold coins in Britain, and the pierced solidus the westernmost example of reused coin, whose life trajectory probably differed from the solidus of Justinian I.

The combined distribution of early Byzantine copper and gold coins (Fig. 17.5) suggests that Moorhead's 'eastern' group of bronze coins circulated within a range of cultural contacts and values different in nature to those operating in the west. Diplomatic gift is often cited as an important component of the gold distribution – either as jewellery or coin (alongside other precious items of bronze, iron and silk).[33] Gift giving was important in the context of communications between the 'personae of supreme standing in the world' identified by Alcuin in 799.[34] Visits to Rome by Welsh rulers no doubt involved the offering and receiving of gifts as part of transactions securing papal judgement, and Northumbrian bishop Wilfrid and his men travelled to the papal court as *humiles suplices*, and 'collected' relics and 'bought' vestments before leaving Rome – an indirect source of Byzantine desirables.[35]

Travelling pots

Since their first recognition in Britain and Ireland in the 1930s, the clearest archaeological evidence for contact between western Britain and the Byzantine empire has taken the form of modest quantities of diagnostic ceramics imported from different regions around the Mediterranean during the fifth and sixth centuries.

Early Byzantine coarse wares bear a close relationship with their local late Roman equivalents. Often dated by the objects they are associated with, their

appearance in Britain appears to be confined to the narrow period *c*. 475–550. The main types reaching Britain were manufactured in oil- or wine-producing areas of the empire: they include LRA1 from North Africa, the Antioch area? (for olive oil from Syria) and Cyprus, and LRA2 from the Argolid of the Peloponnese, Greece and the Aegean island of Chios (famous for its wine); and some examples of LRA3 from the wine producing areas of western Anatolia such as Sardis. The top of a late fifth/early sixth-century LRA1 amphora found by a diver off Cawsand, Plymouth Sound, in the 1970s but only recently published, has a form paralleled by an example from the productive coastal site at Bantham.[36]

Byzantine fine wares such as Phocaean Red Slipware (PRS) have been discussed elsewhere.[37] They appear to have been traded outside the eastern Mediterranean only between the mid-late fifth to mid-late sixth century (Hayes form 3). Dinas Powys near Cardiff has one of the earliest PRS imports (dated *c*. 460–490), while Tintagel has produced almost half of the known total in Britain. North African Red Slipware (ARS) from the Carthage area (representing about thirty-two vessels) and North African cylindrical amphorae make up the second late sub-group ('later African phase' dated *c*. 525–550). This ware is also found mainly in south-west Britain, but its distribution reaches up the Irish Sea to the monasteries at Whithorn and Iona.

This chapter is not concerned with the methods of transport and routes involved to bring this material to Britain and Ireland, as this has been well covered elsewhere.[38] Others have shown how the ceramic distribution has a bias focused on south Wales and the south-west of England, suggesting a region of Britain where either direct or indirect contact was maintained between Byzantium and the post-Roman British kingdoms in this region. A number of recently published sites producing Mediterranean imports have been added to the distribution presented here (Fig. 17.6). It has been suggested that much of the modest quantity of Byzantine pottery reaching Ireland could have reached Ireland from Britain.[39] The updated catalogue of imports to Ireland lists twenty-one sites with Mediterranean imports. This includes possible ARS from Kilree, Co. Kilkenny, and twenty sites with late fifth and early sixth century amphorae presumed to contain wine, oil and other commodities.[40]

Of all the sites, Tintagel in Cornwall stands out as having a clear role as a centre of political power in the region that attracted merchantmen, despite being exposed, and lacking a good harbour. Imports and residues in amphorae from recent excavations point to multiple supply sources in the Mediterranean and Iberian Peninsula,[41] through incremental exchanges. Bantham (in Devon) has recently been interpreted as a possible port with population.[42] A similar situation existed in south Wales – centred on elite control of the trade of raw materials (tin in Cornwall, lead/silver in the Mendips and south Wales, possibly copper in Ireland), and other commodities. Centres of power at Dinas Powys near Cardiff, Longbury Bank near Tenby and Hen Gastell near Swansea operated within

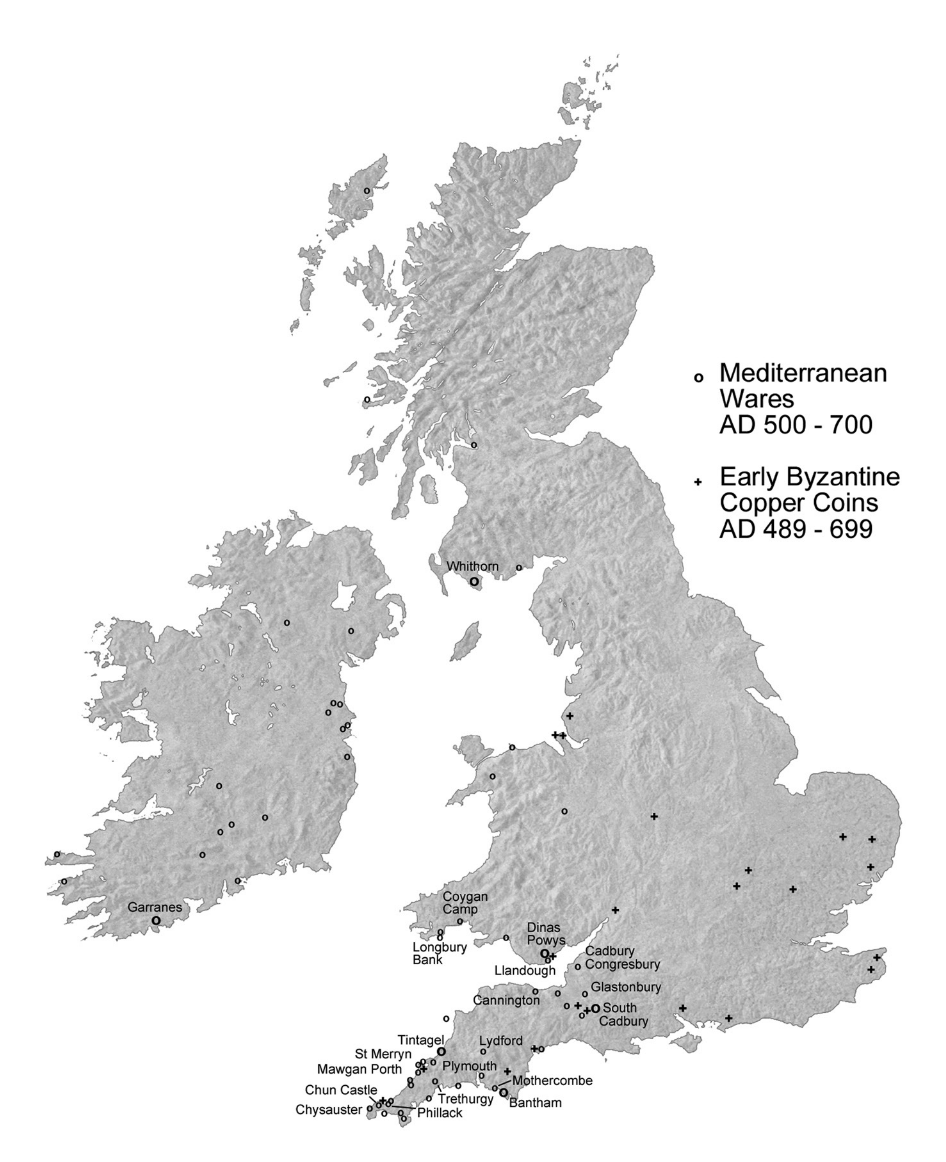


Figure 17.6 Distribution of early Byzantine coins and ceramics compared. (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

similar networks of alliances and exchange. While the specific mechanisms and political dynamics of dispersal are as yet imperfectly understood, it would appear that pottery was distributed in Britain from primary importation sites.

The evidence from mobile coinage and less mobile ceramics has tended to be considered separately, because of scepticism about the historical provenances of the former. When the distributions of contemporary ceramics and copper coinage are combined and recent discoveries incorporated (Fig. 17.6), a correlation may be suggested between the copper coinage of the south-west British group – of low intrinsic value, usually associated with trade/exchange – and Mediterranean wares. The introduction of many of these coins may have been directly linked with the import of Mediterranean goods, particularly in the sixth century. In contrast, the distribution of gold solidi is predominantly focused on eastern England up to Northumbria, with a concentration in the south east. This appears to reflect a different set of connections with the Continent, and another trading axis along the Rhine/with Frankia. Gift exchange in elite circles appears likely for many – for a high proportion show evidence of modification for incorporation into jewellery. While sixth-century coins are predominantly from eastern mints, mirroring the sources of PRS, seventh-century coins are both less common, and the western mints rise to 38 per cent.[43] Connections continue, but the dynamics of exchange had shifted.

Luxury

'High-end' Byzantine goods in limited quantities reached Britain, from a bronze pail found on the Isle of Wight to silver spoons, Byzantine silks and bronze vessels.[44] Isolated finds include a Byzantine garnet intaglio found during excavations in 1996 at Cefn Cwmwd, Anglesey. Inscribed with a scorpion, it was probably made in the eastern Mediterranean in about the sixth to seventh century AD.[45] Its occurrence does not necessarily imply literacy at Cefn Cwmwd, as it may reflect the loss of an item valued for its visual qualities.[46] This is not the only intaglio to be found during excavation in Britain. An eleventh-century green jasper Byzantine intaglio engraved with a horseman seated on a rearing horse, with spear, over a serpent or dragon – either St. Theodore or St. George, was found at Winchester in 2001.[47] This has been interpreted as a reflection of contact between Anglo-Saxon kings and Byzantium – and imaginatively as a prized possession of an English Varangian guardsman returning to Winchester, or of an itinerant merchant.[48] Late links at Winchester are also suggested by three late tenth/mid-eleventh-century coins and two eleventh-century Byzantine lead seals once attached to documents brought by carriers from Constantinople (one of John Raphael, *protospatharios* at Constantinople *c*. 1030–1040, the other of patriarch Sophronius II of Jerusalem, after 1036–1076/83).[49]

People

Ships operating within the communication and trade networks across Byzantium at its most expansive not only carried wine, pottery and other commodities, but

also people and disease. The fifth century saw the movements of people including communities from south-west England to Armorica (Brittany) and Galicia. A notable advance in understanding population mobility has been the application of strontium and oxygen isotope analysis to the study of human remains in order to identify the childhood place of origin of individuals. This method has recently been applied to a number of cemetery populations from Wales and the Isle of Man.[50] An initial sample of analysis was undertaken at the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Isotope Geosciences Laboratory in Nottingham as part of Katie Hemer's 2010 doctoral research, and has since continued through further collaboration between Hemer and colleagues at the facility. The strontium and oxygen isotope analysis has identified evidence for both the long-distance and regional mobility of early medieval people.[51]

Of the south Wales individuals analysed – namely fifteen burials sampled from Llandough, ten from Brownslade Burrows, five from Porthclew, Pembrokeshire, and three from West Angle Bay – five individuals with enriched oxygen values may have come from outside the British Isles, and those regions around the Mediterranean Sea, including the coasts of Algeria, Morocco and south-east Iberian Peninsula, are suggested as possible places of origin.[52] This work is continuing, and Amgueddfa Cymru has facilitated the taking of further samples for analysis. Drs Edel Bhreathnach and Elizabeth O'Brien, with the collaboration of Dr Jacqueline Cahill Wilson, have been studying strontium and oxygen isotopic analysis of early medieval burials in Ireland. Results of research carried out by Dr Cahill Wilson under licence from the National Museum Ireland on a crouched male burial dated to the fifth/sixth century from the Brookside site in Bettystown, Co. Meath, indicates from his strontium/oxygen isotopic signature, an origin in the region of North Africa/southern Spain, the signature being similar to the results from Wales.[53] Clearly, this line of scientific research is going to allow the future reassessment of the movement of people between the Byzantine world and the Insular West in a way impossible up to now.

Little evidence for the plagues which are recorded in early annals has been identified so far in the skeleton record in Britain. While they may have been significant demographic disasters in Ireland and parts of Britain, we know little about the resilience of the population to bounce back. The seaborne contagion best known as the Great Plague started in 541 in the eastern Mediterranean, also known as the Justinianic Plague. Irish Annals describe its outbreak in Ireland in 544/545 (the great mortality called *blefed; Annals of Tigernach*), and a backlash in 550/551. On the basis of contemporary sources, it has been claimed that it affected the Irish and western British more than the Anglo-Saxons. Various scholars have linked its appearance with the Byzantine commercial network spreading national plagues of exceptional virulence.[54] One characteristic is that the plague appears to have arrived by ships and the sea, tending to strike coastal communities first. Ireland

was affected by a variety of epidemics for thirty years or so. Welsh annals (*Annales Cambriae*) record the death of the Welsh ruler, king Maelgwn of Gwynedd in the 'great mortality of 547' (*Mortalitas magna in qua pausat Mailcun rex Genedotae*), although the reliability of this annal, an adaptation of an Irish annalistic entry, has been questioned).[55] It is about this time that St. Teilo left for Cornwall, then Brittany, where he was received by Samson of Dol. The peak period of importation of Mediterranean wares is thought to lie between about 475 and 550, and commentators have noted that the reduction in volume of imports appears to coincide with the onset of the Justinianic Plague and Justinian's attempts to reconquer the former Roman empire in the west (coupled to diplomatic initiatives).[56]

Collections

The collections of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales contain a number of significant items that relate to the world of the Byzantine empire, but are little known (such as a Byzantine lead seal found in Cyprus).[57] Of these, the most significant is the Byzantine coin collection.

The formation of the national coin collections developed from a combination of gifts and purchases from gentlemen's cabinets and private collecting, and an active collections strategy aimed at examples and new discoveries of Welsh relevance. As regards gifts and cabinets, the collection has few constraints geographically or chronologically, representing a wide range of numismatic interests. It includes a small but interesting collection of Byzantine material, a collection of 426 Byzantine coins, acquired along with ancient Greek coinage as a comparative series to the British provenanced material. Many of these are unexceptional coppers, but the collection does cover more or less the entire span from Anastasius I's reform until the fifteenth century.

The 'quality' element comprises around ninety gold coins, again of all periods, bequeathed in 1932 by MP and Lord Mayor of Brighton Sir Charles Thomas-Stanford (Figs. 17.8–17.10). He had Welsh antecedents, was a bibliophile, collector of early editions of Euclid (now in the National Library of Wales) and a serial collector of coins – in particular of several collections of ancient Greek coins sold in London auctions. His later enthusiasm was for late Roman and Byzantine gold (plus, it seems, a life-long interest in coins of ancient Corinth), and so the museum is fortunate to have a decent run of fourth-fifth century Roman gold as well as 'Byzantine' examples from the 490s on.

Edward Besly, the National Museum's Numismatist, was able a while back to trace many of his purchases at London sales in the 1920s through the British Museum's annotated catalogues (some from a Madrid collection). The catalogue from 1925 indicates that Thomas-Stanford bought quite a few Byzantine gold coins from a collection belonging to an inhabitant of Abertillery, Monmouthshire, the late Dr R.T. Cassal (see Fig. 17.7b).[58]



Figure 17.7 Gold coins with imperial portraits: a. Tremissis (1/3 solidus) of Justin I (518–527, Constantinople); b. Gold solidus of Theophilos (829–842) (from Dr. Cassal's estate) showing on R, facing busts of Michael II (emperor's deceased father) and Constantine (his deceased son); c. Solidus of Anastasius I (491–518), minted in Constantinople (purchased 1984); d. Solidus of Justin I (518–527), minted in Constantinople (Thomas-Stanford Bequest) (scale 2:1). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)



Figure 17.8 Gold with imperial portraits from the Thomas-Stanford Bequest: a. Solidus of Justin II (565–578), minted in Constantinople; b. Gold solidus of Constans II (641–668); c. Solidus of Constans II, Constantine IV (Heraclius and Tiberius on reverse) – whole imperial family (after June 659); d. Solidus of Maurice (582–602), minted in Constantinople (scale 2:1). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)



Figure 17.9 a. Solidus of Maurice (582–602), minted in Ravenna (purchased 1984); b. Gold histamenon nomisma of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) (Thomas-Stanford Bequest); c. Gold tetarteron nomisma of Theodora (1055–1056) (Thomas-Stanford Bequest) (scale 2:1). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

The whole collection provides a representative series of the Byzantine emperor portraits and denominations. Eastern coins in the collection were mostly minted in Constantinople, including solidi of Anastasius I (491–518) and Justin I (518–527).

George Boon added gold and copper denominations to this collection, including a 20-noumia coin of Anastasius (Fig. 17.10c), as well late Byzantine coins including silver half hyperpyron of John VIII Palaiologos (1425–1448), minted in Constantinople.



Figure 17.10 Early Byzantine copper coins: a. half-follis of Justin I (518–527); b. 40 noumia (follis) of Justinian I (527–565, Constantinople); c. Anastasius I 20 noumia (Constantinople); d. copper 20 noumia (half-follis) of Constans II (641–668, Carthage) (purchased 1958); e. copper 20 noumia (half-follis) of Heraclius (610–641) (old stock, 1986) (scale 2:1).

The intentionally striking images of imperial rulers on Byzantine coins had an impact on coin imagery in the west (including imitative issues of the gold nomisma, benchmark of purity and standards). The range of the collection illustrates the changing face of the emperor as embodiment of unwavering political authority and monetary legitimacy of official issue, starting with the military figures (the Christian warrior) on solidi with spear and shield up to Justinian I (e.g. Justin I; Fig. 17.7d). This was followed by a trend away from overt military depictions, with military cloak instead of shield, removal of spear, and crown instead of helmet (though some later emperors such as Maurice reverted to the helmet of Justinian's coins).[59] Justinian appears holding the *globis cruciger* (the world in his palm) rather than the traditional spear (Fig. 17.4a). The cross surmounting the globe is replaced with a small Victory crowning the emperor with a wreath on solidi of Justin II (Fig. 17.8a). In the seventh century emperors were shown in civilian robes. The variety in the depiction of heads (for example those of Maurice, looking at times similar to Justinian I) suggest that they did not convey what could be called an imperial portrait, until the rule of Phocas (602–610).[60] The busts of Heraclius (610–641) change in successive issues over three decades, his beard starting short and growing in length to 'patriarchal proportions'.[61] Succession is shown in the depiction of the imperial dynasty on the obverse of a solidus of Constans II (630–668), in which his eldest son stands to the left (according to protocol), and on its reverse small standing figures of Heraclius and Tiberius, his two younger sons, have different heights (they were later recognised by Constantine IV (668–685) as co-Augusti for a period; Fig. 17.8c).[62] The collection also illustrates the brilliant period of portraiture from the end of the reign of Constantine IV, and gifted portraits of Leontius (695–698),[63] Tiberius II (698–705), Anastasius II (713–715),[64] and Theodosius III (715–717). Under the Iconoclast emperors (*c*. 726 to 843), imperial busts change – with the concentration on the imperial dynastic lineage and adoption of a linear engraving style without an attempt at the portrait. Lettering becomes more artistic and an important part of the overall design, while the positioning of the younger man on the left and junior colleagues represented by smaller sizes, shows the continuing care in observing protocol, as on the solidus of Theophilos (829–842) on the obverse, holding the patriarchal cross and *akakia* (a hollow cylinder with jewelled ends, holding dust, a reminder of mortality). The reverse shows busts of his deceased bearded father Michael II and his deceased beardless son Constantine, smaller in size (Fig. 17.7b).[65] The highly stylised nature of imperial representations continued to be reflected in coins after 843, down to the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), whose coinage also saw the rapid reintroduction of the 'naturalistic' bust of Christ (Fig. 17.9b). The subsequent Macedonian period saw the introduction of a new gold coin, the *tetarteron*, and the solidus was enlarged into a larger coin of the same weight, the *histamenon*, providing engravers with a larger flan on which to show figures as regular types. This resulted in high standards of design, and fine engraving, as seen on the coins of Nikephoros II[66] and Theodora (1055–1056), who ruled in her own right (Fig. 17.9b, c).[67] An equally important

component of the collection are the designs on later ‘bezants’ (Latin *bizantius*) referred to in twelfth-century England (applied to the *hyperpyron* of the later dynasties of the Komnenoi and Angeloi).[68]

Cures

St. Menas ampullae, small Byzantine pilgrim flasks made of fired clay for holy water or oil, are highly informative souvenirs of early devotion. The holy shrine

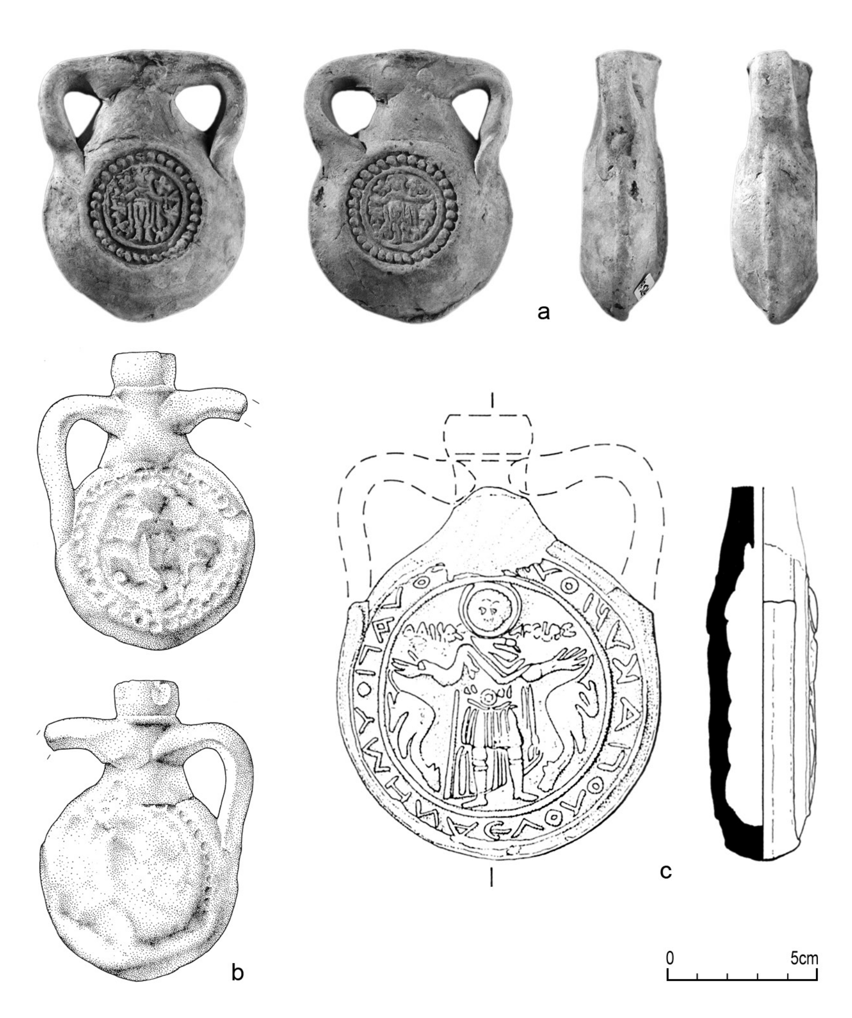


Figure 17.11 a. St. Menas ampulla (NMW A 39032) (Copyright: National Museum Wales); b. St. Menas ampulla from Meols (Copyright: National Museums Liverpool); c. St. Menas ampulla from Preston on the Hill, Cheshire (Copyright: Norton Priory).

of the widely venerated St. Menas at Abu Mena became Egypt's premier pilgrimage centre, with imperial patronage. The large numbers of earthenware ampullae made near the shrine during the sixth and seventh centuries (*c*. 500–650) were not just souvenirs but had different layers of meaning, including amuletic and medicinal functions, being filled either with sanctified water or oil from a lamp suspended above the tomb.[69] They have reportedly been discovered around the Mediterranean and into Europe.[70] Bangert and others have studied their spread, including examples from Germany and France – and it remains uncertain when many of these were imported from the eastern Mediterranean.[71]

St. Menas ampullae were acquired by museums in considerable numbers from Egypt or around the south-eastern Mediterranean. One newly identified example is a previously unpublished flask in the Department of Art's collections, given to the National Museum in 1897 (NMW A 39032; Fig. 17.11a). The Cardiff ampulla bears on one side the popular scene showing St. Menas with a highly stylised tunic and chlamys, flanked by the two camels that refused to leave his corpse.[72]

Only a small number are known from England, and uncertainties over provenance and contexts often clouded discussion of their wider context.[73] One from the Icknield Way near Derby was initially interpreted as a medieval import or curiosity;[74] one was found during excavations in Canterbury in 1868, and three others of uncertain provenance are from the Canterbury area (two perhaps from Faversham); one may be from York (now in Yorkshire Museum), and two possible examples are from Shincliffe, Co. Durham (total at least nine).[75] Some were arguably imported in the early medieval period, the distribution falling within that for other post-Roman Mediterranean finds. Recent finds include one from the Isle of Wight.[76] Two that do appear to have been lost in antiquity come from the north-west: one found in 1955 by fishermen at low tide in peat at Meols on the Wirral, and another near the shore of the Inner Mersey Estuary at Preston Brook, near Halton, Cheshire, in 1981 (Fig. 17.11b, c).[77] The latter shows the Blessing of St. Menas in Alexandrian Greek. Interestingly, a follis of Justinian I was found in 2000 only 800m from the ampulla findspot.

Copies

For museums, authentication is something that is routinely and seriously undertaken, to ensure that we present to the public work that speaks truthfully for the past. This sometimes involves checking collections, such as the Collection of Silver assembled by Sir Charles James Jackson and bequeathed by him to the National Museum. In 1990 Stephan Hauser recognised the similarity of two spoons published as 'Roman'[78] to some of the thirty-six spoons from the early Byzantine 'First Cyprus Treasure', found in Lamboussa in 1899 (buried in the early seventh century, perhaps to evade the Arab invaders of AD 653). Twenty-five spoons are in London; eleven had long been missing, but Hauser had identified eleven 'possibles' in various private and museum collections. Consultation between Oliver Fairclough (National Museum Wales) and David Buckton (British Museum) concluded that the 'Cardiff two' are probably early twentieth-century copies of Lamboussa Treasure spoons.[79]

In the nineteenth century late antique and medieval ivories were the subject of significant casting programmes (known as 'fictile ivories'). This included the replication of late antique and Byzantine ivory diptychs and book covers commissioned by wealthy and influential patrons.[80] John Ward was keen to establish



a



b

Figure 17.12 Nineteenth-century casts of ivories by Franchi & Sons. *Left*: cast of a consular panel showing Probus Magnus, AD 518, flanked by Roma and Constantinople (original in Cabinet de Médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Westwood 1876, 22, no. 62); *Right*: cast of the consular diptych showing Clementinus, consul of the East, flanked by Rome and Constantinople (issued at Constantinople, AD 513), taken from an original in National Museum Liverpool (Westwood 1876, 18–19). (Copyright: National Museum Wales)

a didactic collection to inspire creativity in Wales and provide illustrations for lectures on art and archaeology through the representation of all ages and styles of art. A series of plaster of Paris reproductions of antique ivories (159) was acquired between 1900 and 1902 for the Cardiff Free Library & Museum to illustrate ivory carving from the Roman period to the seventeenth century.[81] Casts were acquired from the Arundel Society, founded in 1848, to produce accurate copies of works of art intended for sale to museums, art institutions and private collectors.

The series, manufactured by G.G. Franchi & Sons, includes an important Byzantine cast (Fig. 17.12).[82] As Helen Rufus-Ward has outlined elsewhere, interest in Byzantine art developed from being a narrow sphere in the mid-nineteenth century to one of more importance for museum-collecting strategies in the second half of the nineteenth century.[83] To many early collectors, Classical qualities were looked for, resulting in many examples being incorrectly dated to the second or third century, the date first applied to the label of the National Museum's cast of Liverpool's Hygeia Diptych, acquired in 1901. Their display at Cardiff Museum focused on allowing the visitor to make art-historical comparisons, in a gallery surrounded by a wide array of applied art of all periods. While plaster casts fell out of favour in many museum displays during the twentieth century, their value is now being increasingly recognised, many being over 100 years old and high technical achievements in their own right.

Fragments

The lure of Byzantine art and the appeal of collecting has often resulted in life histories for objects well beyond the imaginations of their original makers. In 1986 an eleventh-century Byzantine mosaic depicting the head of an apostle in the church at Talygarn in south Wales was identified as originally from the west wall of the cathedral Santa Maria Assunta on the island of Torcello, near Venice. The expressive medallion of a bearded man was noticed by the newly appointed vicar, the Reverend Martin Reynolds, who in July 1986 contacted John Lewis, then Assistant Keeper of Medieval & Later Archaeology at the National Museum. John recognised it as Italian and suggested that the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, were contacted for a further opinion, where Robin Cormack identified it on the basis of a photograph as Byzantine, and a missing fifth fragment of the eleventh-century Last Judgment mosaic on the west wall of the cathedral (basilica) of Santa Maria Assunta, on the island of Torcello in the Venetian lagoon.

During the eleventh century the island was at its artistic peak, and the object of equal patronage as Venice itself. The medallion belongs to the original mosaics of the 1070s, and shows the twelfth apostle's head. It was detached and removed surreptitiously from the huge wall mosaic (which shows the apostles seated either side of Christ with the Virgin and John the Baptist) in the nineteenth century. Cormack had suspected the unscrupulous restorer, Giovanni Moro, who undertook the second known 'restoration' at Torcello between 1853 and 1856 and who

was arrested in 1858, tried, convicted and sent to prison for six days after two mosaic heads from the Torcello church were found in his home.[84]

However, the removal has been reconsidered.[85] Moro's younger contemporary Antonio Salviati also played a large part in remaking the first three registers of the west wall in a campaign in 1871–1872. It is about this time, when the order of the heads of the apostles was changed (1872–1873) that the wall was mined for heads, and this piece may have been detached along with two others and come onto the market.[86] Only three missing elements from the Last Judgment mosaic have been found outside Torcello – this head, the head of an old man in a private collection,[87] and an angel's head (known as the Cluny or Louvre head) that was acquired in 1892 by the Cluny Museum in Paris.

The medallion was acquired by the Welsh engineer, archaeologist and renowned scholar of medieval castles, George Thomas Clark (1809–1898), who had donated the new St. Anne's church at Talygarn in memory of his wife (1887), and to which he gifted the mosaic. The exact date and circumstances of its acquisition are unclear, but he was in Venice with his daughter Blanch soon after his wife's death in 1885, to make plans to rebuild the Talygarn church. He also had dealings with the Salviati Company, through the advice of an old friend, Austen Henry Layard ('of Nineveh'), who had retired to Venice.[88] Virtuoso Italian craftsmen were also employed by him to decorate his new house, Talygarn, and Salviati was the foremost mosaicist who established a business in England. Clark may have acquired the mosaic at about this time – though he may have been unaware of its history.[89] In the same year he purchased the large Salviati mosaic 'Venice Presenting the Baton of Command to Francesco Morosini' (1881) from the Venice and Murano Glass and Mosaic Company for £250 and had it installed in the hall of the house.

Following identification of the Torcello mosaic in 1986, concerns were expressed for its safety (it was on the wall of the then vestry). Conservators of the National Museum of Wales were called in to remove the high-quality stone and glass mosaic from the wall, where it was considered to be at risk of theft, for safe keeping and it remained in this building until the parish council and the Representative Body of the Church in Wales had made a decision on its future. The mosaic was later taken to Sotheby's in London, conserved and sold at public auction for $427,152 (560 million lire) one hundred years after its setting on the wall of the small Welsh church, going to a private collection.

Concluding remarks

Well trodden archaeological data and old, lesser known, collections at times merit re-assessment. From the above sketches, it is clear that provenance, volume, likely rates of circulation and date of loss for many classes of artefact are key to a clearer and more nuanced understanding of connections between Britain and the world of the Byzantine emperors across time. The distribution patterns of early Byzantine copper coins in Britain and isolated finds do not, on balance, appear to be completely accidental, and a correspondence may be suggested between more

reliably provenanced examples and early Byzantine imported pottery. It comes as no surprise that these classes of object had very different degrees of mobility and rates of exchange, reflected in the wider spread of the former. This review supports an eastern, Frankish, focus for gold and combined Atlantic/Channel routes for copper, though the degree to which the west was less monetised[90] can only really be assessed when the database has grown and more early medieval economic hubs have been excavated.

The diverse connections to the Byzantine emperor, whether via direct commercial and intellectual reach, spiritual responsibility[91] or indirect diplomacy, movement of people, down-the-line exchange, whether in the minds, economics, politics or social exchanges of people, differed in intensity at different periods. Connections can also be made through the later collecting policies of those museums caring for both the three-dimensional records and intangible memories of Byzantium in the West, and its representation to audiences today.

Notes

1 I have inevitably relied heavily on the past and current research of colleagues, some cited and some not, and am grateful to all. I would in particular like to thank my colleagues at the National Museum, Edward Besly, Mary Davis, Mark Lodwick, Louise Mumford, Andrew Renton and Claire Smith, for information, Tony Daly for maps and figures, and Robin Maggs for photographs. I am also most grateful to Martin Biddle, Sam Moorhead, Dr. Rob Philpott, Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien, Dr. David Griffiths and Dr. Katie Hemer (University of Sheffield) and for advice and access to information, some unpublished.

2 Leontius of Cyprus, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, ed. Festugière and Rydén 1974: chap. 8, 453–454, trans. Dawes and Baynes 1948: chap. 10, 217; Campbell and Bowles 2002: 309.

3 It has been suggested that Procopius' knowledge of ships trading from the lands of the Franks to Britain may have been derived from Byzantine sailors and merchants, as he was based in Constantinople: see Campbell and Bowles 2002: 310; Wooding 1996: 46–47; Georganteli and Cook 2006: 14.

4 Rhys 1919, accepted by Nash-Williams 1950: no. 104.

5 Knight 1995: 5–6; Tedeschi 2005: 215.

6 Edwards 2013: CN 37, 301–305.

7 Handley 2003: 130.

8 Charles-Edwards 2010: 20–23.

9 Edwards 2013: 304.

10 For example, in the 580s, Frankish king Childebert received 50,000 solidi as payment from the emperor Maurice to expel the Lombards from Italy: Georganteli and Cook 2006: 11. Many Byzantine gold coins were probably melted down to make ornaments and jewellery.

11 Bland and Loriot 2010: Appendix 1.

12 For lists, see Bland and Loriot 2010: 97–100.

13 Morrisson 2014: 215.

14 Coin Register 2011: no. 56.

15 Boon 1991: 44 'Class A'.

16 Boon 1991: 42–45, 'Class B'.

17 Morrisson 2014: 213.

18 Moorhead 2009.
19 Moorhead 2009: 265.
20 Moorhead 2009: Table 1, nos. 5, 11.
21 Moorhead 2009: Table 1, no. 23, and *in litt*.
22 PAS IOW-189AE5.
23 Constantinople; Coin Register 2010: nos. 42 and 44.
24 Nicomedia: Coin Register 2013: no. 60; Antioch: Coin Register 2012: no. 14 respectively.
25 Carthage: Coin Register 2011: no. 55.
26 Georganteli 2012: 669 ff.
27 George Boon notebook, National Museum Cardiff archive; Guest and Wells 2007: 189 no. 519.
28 Coin Register 2014: nos. 27–29.
29 Philpott 1998: 197–202.
30 R. Philpott, *in litt*. 9.6.14.
31 Griffiths 2009: 275.
32 Abdy and Williams 2006: 72; Bland and Loriot 2010: 330.
33 On gift-giving see also the comments by Lynn Jones in this volume, Chapter 16.
34 Alcuin, *Ep*. 174, ed. Dümmler 1895: 288; King 1987: 287.
35 Nelson 2010: 131.
36 Duggan 2013: 239 ff.; Bidwell, Croom and McBride 2011: 95, Fig. 14:1.
37 E.g. Campbell and Bowles 2002; Campbell 2007.
38 E.g. Fulford 1989: 1–6; Campbell 1996; Bowman 1996; Campbell and Bowles 2002: 299; Decker 2002; Campbell 2007: 125–139; on imports to Vigo, Fernández Fernández 2010: 234–235.
39 Ó Floinn 2009: 232–233; see also Bateson 1973; Bateson 1976; Doherty 1980; Doyle 2009.
40 LRA1/2; Doyle 1998; Doyle 1999; Kelly 2008: 16–17; Doyle 2009: Table 2.
41 Jones 2007: 254.
42 Bidwell, Croom and McBride 2011: 132.
43 Morrisson 2014: 215, Fig. 217.
44 Harris 2003; Georganteli 2012: 674.
45 Roberts, Cuttler and Hughes 2012.
46 *contra* Dark 2000: 37.
47 Henig 2012: 689–690.
48 Georganteli 2012: 678.
49 Grierson 2012: 680. The first English king to be called *baslieus Anglorum* or *totius Brittaniae basileus* was Athelstan on two charters dated AD 931, and the term *basileus* appears more frequently on charters of the late tenth and early eleventh century, signalling a reflection of imperial power: Lopez 1948: 161–162.
50 Hemer 2010; Hemer *et al.* 2013; Hemer *et al.* 2014.
51 Hemer 2010; Hemer *et al.* 2013; Hemer *et al.* 2014.
52 Brownslade 528A, Llandough 10 (undated), Brownslade 535, Llandough 972 (undated), Porth Clew 03; Hemer *et al* 2013: 2356.
53 Elizabeth O'Brien, *in litt*.; Hemer *et al.* 2013.
54 E.g. Maddicott 2007: 174–175.
55 Morris 1980: 85; Dumville 1984: 53–54.
56 Dark 2000: 130; Harris 2003: 152.
57 In the collections of National Museum Cardiff; wt 7.639g; NMW acc. no. 58.59/6.
58 'Second portion of collection formed by the late Dr. R.T. Cassal of Abertillery, Mon.', Sotheby's 22.4.25.
59 Grierson 1982: 51.
60 Examples in the museum collection include solidi of Phocas, Constantinople, (NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.14) and Carthage (NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.17) and a semissis of Phocas, showing unbearded head in profile (NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.15).

61 Whitting 1973: 271. Examples in the collections include a solidus of Heraclius, Constantinople (32.247/4.18) and three solidi in which he appears with a younger, beardless Heraclius Constantine on the left: NMW acc. nos. 59.355/2; 32.247/4.19, 4.20. A similar sequence of growth can be seen on Constantinople solidi of Constans II: NMW acc. nos. 32.247/4.33, 4.34, 4.35. On the imagery on the Heraclian coinage see also the contribution of Mike Humphreys in this volume.
62 Solidus, Constantinople, NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.40.
63 Solidus, Constantinople, NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.45.
64 Solidus, Constantinople, NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.48.
65 Solidus, NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.58.
66 Histamenon nomisma; NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.67.
67 Tetarteron nomisma; NMW acc. no. 32.247/4.70.
68 Cook 1999: 255. Examples include the hyperpyron of John II Komnenos (1118–1143), Constantinople, NMW acc. nos. 32.247/4.85, 4.86, 4.87.
69 Meinardus 1961: 353, 356, 365 n.57; Grossmann 1998: 282; Talbot 2002; Litinas 2008.
70 Drescher 1946: xxix; Engemann 1989.
71 Bangert 2007: 25–33; Metzger 1981; Entwhistle 1994; St. Clair 1986: cats. 145–152; Witt 2000; Anderson 2004: 79–93.
72 The die does not occur in the recent catalogue by Witt 2000.
73 For questioning whether ampullae in north European collections could be regarded as evidence for pilgrims returning from Egypt in antiquity, see Linscheid 1991.
74 O'Ferrall 1951: 78–79.
75 Bangert 2006: 45; Bangert 2009: 30; Wellbeloved 1891: 227.
76 The British Museum, P&E, MME1875.10–12.00016; Georganteli 2012: 674 n.16.
77 Griffiths and Bangert 2007: 59–60.
78 Jackson 1911.
79 NMW A (l) 330 and A (L) 122; BM 99.4.25.11 and 99.4.25.18.
80 Wyatt 1856; Westwood 1876.
81 Letter from W.W. Watts to Ward, 10th December 1901; Annual Report ending 31st March 1902.
82 McItterick 2013: 98–99.
83 Rufus-Ward 2009.
84 Cormack 1987.
85 Andreescu-Treadgold 1998: 279–300.
86 Andreescu-Treadgold 1997: cat. 293b; Andreescu-Treadgold 2013: 281.
87 Merkel 1988: 35.
88 Leech 1998: 200.
89 Andreescu-Treadgold 1998: 279–300.
90 Morrisson 2014: 220.
91 Religious motives have been associated with the appearance of St. Menas ampullae: Bengert 2007: 33; Brachen 2009: 82–83.

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